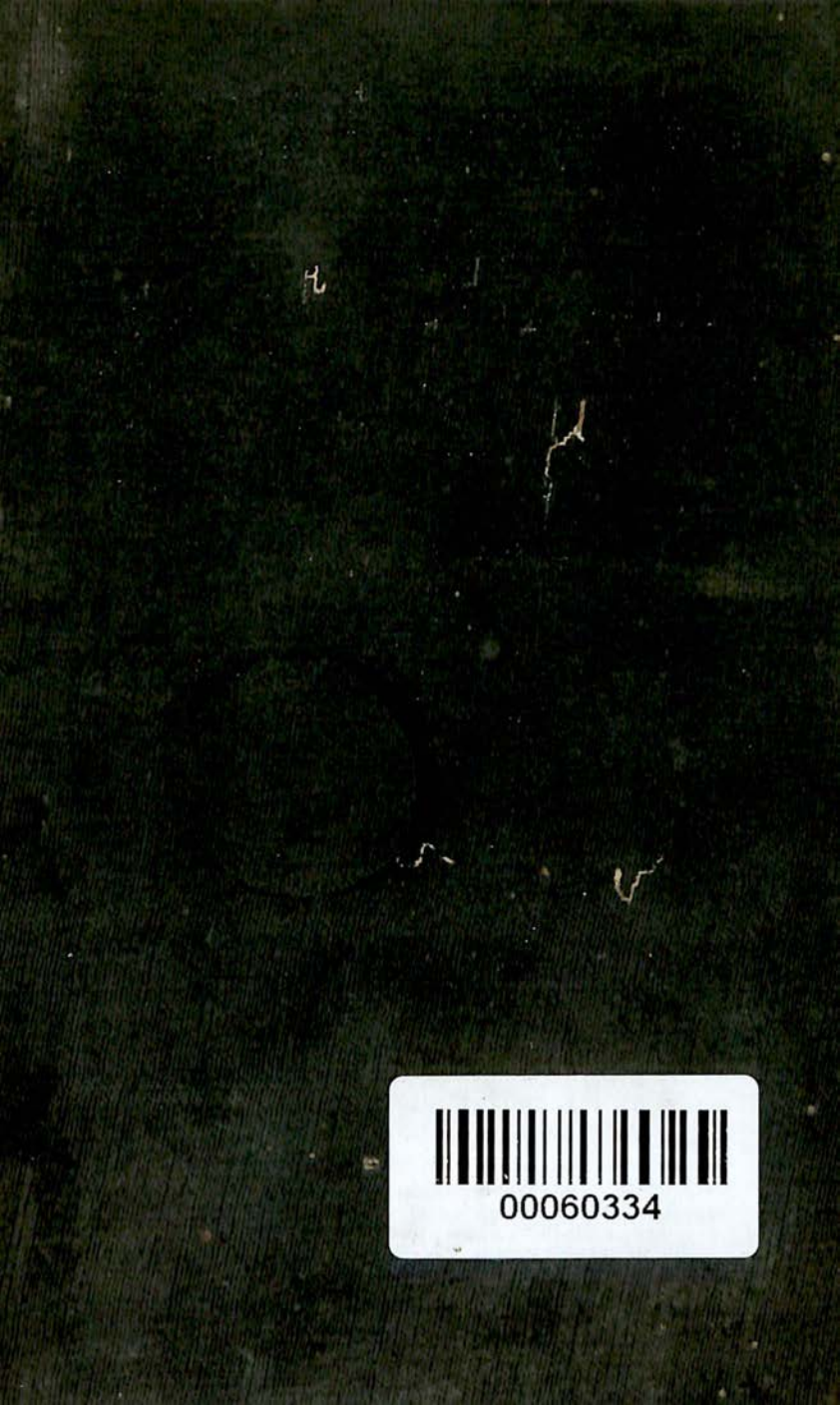
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RAMBLES

IN

THE DESERTS OF SYRIA

AND AMONG THE

TURKOMANS AND BEDAWEENS.

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PREFACE.

THIS endeavour to add, be it ever so little, to the general stock of information on the state of Turkey was suggested by the author's father, at whose request the letters were written during a residence of several years in the Levant, and to whom this work is affectionately dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

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RAMBLES

IN

THE DESERTS OF SYRIA.

LETTER I.

Valley of Salt—Hanadi Arabs—Haji Batran—Anezi Arabs—Sheikh Jedaan—Anezi Camp—Bedaween Life.

Beles: October 6, 1858.

I WRITE from a camp of the Bedaween, on the right bank of the Euphrates. I shaped my course in a south-easterly direction from Aleppo—not following any road or pathway, for there is none such in the desert. Leaving on my right the Salt Lake of Jibool, supposed to be the Valley of Salt of the 2nd Book of Samuel, in which Hadadezer was routed by King David with a loss of eighteen thousand men, I reached in the evening an Arab camp of the Hanadi tribe, whose chief, Haji Batran, I wished to take with me. He was absent, however; and, after partaking of the hospitality offered by his four wives, I proceeded next morning towards the east, accompanied by a few servants and Arab followers of my own.

The country is woodless, houseless, uncultivated, and inhabited only by the wildest of the Bedaween tribes. Like most denizens of unbounded plains, these are fanatical votaries of freedom. They are also essentially indolent. Poor and lazy, but brave, they find a ready scope for their warlike impulses, and a timely resource for their subsistence, in the levying of black mail from passing caravans. To check their predatory propensities, Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt, when ruling also over Syria some twenty years ago, brought a tribe of African Bedaween, of tried fidelity and good conduct. Some of these he had stationed between Aleppo and the Salt Lake, to guard the villages from the inroads of more unruly Arabs; and this measure answered well until the Hanadi, or Hindawi (for so the Africans were called, from a supposed Indian origin) became connected by intermarriage with the native Bedaween, and their services in opposition to the latter had assumed a merely nominal existence. Still they were recognised as the representatives of the government in the desert, and our progress without Haji Batran was of doubtful issue. The Hanadi have seventeen hundred fighting men.

We had ridden on for a couple of hours in the fine autumn morning without encounter. Suddenly shouts from the rear announced an attack. Our party quickly closed up. There they were, to be sure, at least fifty or sixty horsemen galloping after us abreast, and in open order, to give room for the play of the long lances, which they brandished furiously as they advanced. On they

came, making the hard burnt-up earth sound again with the rapid fall of many hoofs, and mingling its rolling growl with the long monotonous notes of the Arab song of onslaught. In front, on a powerful bay mare, thundered along a burly figure of sixteen stone at least, and, as he neared us, I was not sorry to make out the bronzed features and loud laugh of Haji Batran, who was bringing us an escort of Hanadi. This semblance of hostile intentions is a compliment of the Bedaween to their friends, but it renders friendly meetings in the desert doubtful affairs before recognition. I once knew a distinguished foreigner trust to his being well mounted, and turn tail before those who came to do him honour in this fashion: a very pretty chase was performed ere his equanimity was restored. Haji Batran collected his party close behind a mound we had reached; and, after exchanging cordial greetings, we dismounted, and crept cautiously to its summit, to survey together the eastern horizon. No Arabs were to be seen. Batran then had our tents pitched, saying that we must wait there till nightfall, as the two great tribes, Anezi and Shammar, had been fighting for several days not far from us, and we might come in for a share in their warfare if we should not pass unobserved. It was a long halt, but there was no gainsaying the arrangement. To while away the weary hours, stories were told, songs sung, pipes smoked, and various feats of legerdemain displayed. Amongst others of the latter diversions, a snowy-bearded patriarch placed his spear-point on his breast, and pretended to pierce him-

self by falling against it, while the butt was stuck fast in the bank of the mound. There was a trick in it of course: perhaps a strong leather belt protected him; but, however that might be, it passed for a miracle, and the charmed life received all due honour accordingly.

When the sun had set, and the short twilight faded away, we mounted again, and followed in single file and in profound silence the stalwart form of Haji Batran on his tall mare, who led the way. Eight hours in the saddle brought us, just before dawn, to another tumulus, which we were told was on the bank of the great river. We halted behind it, and two horsemen were sent round to see if no one else was doing the same on the other side. All being clear, we lay down on the short grass, while a messenger went on to the Anezi camp, for it is never safe to approach one unannounced. Mistakes may occur, or are afterwards alleged as an excuse for plunder. Our scout returned with Sheikh Jedaan himself, the renowned chief of the Fedan Anezi, to welcome our arrival; and with the rising sun we proceeded along the broad and shingly bed of the Euphrates.

A strange scene awaited us on the plain of Beles, where the ancient Syrian kings had parks and forests, as recorded by Xenophon, and which is still known as a favourite haunt of wild boars, wolves, and jackals, though now only clothed with clumps of tamarisks. An open space was crowded with black goat-hair tents in such surprising numbers that they formed not only a camp, but a mighty city of camps, while upwards of

three thousand Bedaween were careering over the plain on their fleet mares as far as the eye could reach; rushing at each other lance in rest, wheeling right and left, charging in a mass, their scanty garments and long hair streaming behind them, singing, screaming, dealing around hard knocks with the butt end of their spears, and laughing loud when blood was drawn by a stray touch with the point. Some were mere children, slenderly clad, and riding wildly, without saddles or bridles, their docile fillies yielding at their best pace to the mere tightening of a rope-halter. Such horsemanship is seen nowhere else. The din was deafening, the confusion bewildering. When we reached the tent of the sheikh, who had galloped on to receive us, we were led to the seat of honour, a camel's packsaddle in the centre of a long narrow carpet. No sooner installed, than we were surrounded by two or three hundred Bedaween, squatting on the ground in several ranks, from each of whom we received a formal welcome.

Jedaan is a young man, under thirty years of age, short in stature, light and wiry, with a handsome countenance and deep expressive black eyes. Elected sheikh for his bravery in battle and wisdom in council, he had all the air and bearing of a desert prince amongst his vassals. Before the tent, which contained five large compartments, stood picketed his milk-white mare, a noble animal, the gift of his enemy, Abd-ul-Kerim, Sheikh of the Shammar. Jedaan's father had taken refuge from a feud in his tribe with the father of that great chief. The boys became sworn brothers;

and now that each is sheikh of his respective tribe, they always avoid meeting in the many fights between the Anezi and the Shammar. Last year the latter were defeated on one occasion, and Abd-ul-Kerim was with difficulty saved by the speed and lasting quality of this mare. On the following day, he sent to tell Jedaan that he would soon have his revenge when reinforcements should come, and that, as he feared for the life of his boyhood's friend, he sent him his mare, which could distance every other in the Shammar tribe. Jedaan rode her in the next engagement he had with Abd-ul-Kerim, the Anezi were beaten, and she brought him home unhurt after a long pursuit. There is little bloodshed in this desert warfare, considering the frequency of battles and the numbers engaged, for the conquered generally surrenders and is well treated, while deaths are always avenged sooner or later.

Acts of high-minded generosity are greatly appreciated by the Bedaween, who delight in narrating them. One of their favourite anecdotes is that of the owner of a swift mare which a neighbouring sheikh greatly coveted. A reward was in vain offered to any one of his tribe who could take her for him. She was too fleet to be obtained in the usual way. A proposal of a hundred camels in exchange for her was made and refused. A stratagem was resorted to. The sheikh lay groaning on the lonely plain when the man passed on his mare. Dismounting, the latter raised him gently, and placed him on her to lead him home, supposing him to be wounded or sick. The deceiver galloped off,

and the dupe called after him to take the mare as a gift on the sole condition of never telling the tale, which might deter others from being compassionate.

The Arab tents are made of long belts of coarse cloth, stitched together, and supported by poles of different lengths, with screens of reeds woven with red and blue worsted in rude patterns. All these materials are home-made. The reeds and poles are found on the banks of the Euphrates, which are covered with jungle in many places. Some of the tents are not less than eighty feet long, in squares partitioned by suspending carpets from the roof. The women and children occupy one end, the men the other, and stores are piled in the centre rooms. During winter the best mares and foals are in very bad weather admitted into the tent, and they go freely about every part of it.

The Bedaween never taste animal food, except when a sheep is slaughtered for a guest. The feast is shared on such occasions by as many as can find a morsel to seize. Their ordinary food is bread dipped in melted butter, but they are often reduced to camel's milk, either alone or with a few dates. I once stayed a week with a tribe which had had nothing but camel's milk for three months; they did not appear unusually emaciated, and I did not myself suffer in the least from hunger. It is no fable of the Arabs to attribute to that kind of milk somewhat of the sustaining quality evinced by the wonderful enduring power of the animal which produces it. They wean their foals when only one month old, in order to rear them on camel's rather

than on their mothers' milk, with the view of rendering them capable of long-continued exertion, and they firmly believe in this effect on the constitution.

This singular people seems to be the only one on the face of the globe which has remained in precisely the same state for the last four thousand years. Often conquerors, never subjugated, they have retained the features of the times when the first great empires of the world were founded. They gave sovereigns to Babylonia and Egypt nineteen centuries before Christ. They combated successfully the arms of the Pharaohs and the Assyrian kings; eluded the grasp of Cyrus and Alexander the Great; defied the Roman power; and, when Mahomet united them in a common cause, they carried their Oriental civilisation to the shores of the Bosphorus and the banks of the Tagus, where both the Eastern and the Western Empires had lost the enlightenment of Greece and Rome. The khaliphs of Bagdad, of Cairo, of Cordova, spread the thirst of knowledge around them. Even the Mongolian hordes, which attacked their eastern frontier, derived from them their religion and their intellectual developement. Europe sent her chivalry to assail them, and received back its scattered remnants, bearing only scars and rags from the holy war. Still Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Tunis, Algiers, Morocco, offer the same spectacle of a freedom-loving race, wandering at will over their scorched plains; still the Syrian desert, whose roving tribes have exercised so widely extended an influence on other countries, serves only to furnish a bare subsistence

to a people possessing the same habits and ruled by the same principles in their social and political condition as their fathers Ishmael and Esau.

It is a mistake to suppose that their state is in any way analogous to that of the North American Indians or New Zealanders. These Bedaween Arabs are not savages. They have an organisation. It is the highest possible developement of the pastoral life. They are subject to the influence of public opinion. The lawlessness of the people, and the simple despotism of their chiefs, are, therefore, not altogether untempered. A man, who has disgraced himself by a breach of their species of morality, is shunned by his whole tribe, and is finally forced to leave it as an outcast. A chief, who has drawn the bond of allegiance too tight, is deposed or abandoned, and becomes a mere member of a tribe, or remains without one. Their laws are certainly somewhat peculiar, but they are laws, and, as such, they preclude anarchy. Robbery from a hostile tribe, from a village, caravan, or traveller, is honourable according to the Bedaween code; from an Arab of the same tribe, it involves only restitution. Grave offences of some kinds are punished with death. The execution is effected simply by laying the criminal on the ground and cutting his throat, the executioner being the sheikh himself. Murder is subject to retaliation by the relatives of the victim, if not redeemed by the payment of blood-money. Strange to say, no distinction is drawn between assassination, killing in battle, and accidental homicide.

There exists amongst the Bedaween a most salutary institution, which keeps them from waging wars of extermination. This is the ransom of blood. It falls on all kindred within five degrees. Death may thus be avenged on a large number of relatives. If the price of blood is paid in preference to suffering retaliation, the amount is divided amongst many contributors, whose lives are possibly saved thereby. It is generally the value of fifty camels, falling perhaps on fifty persons, which is not a heavy premium of insurance. This system tends greatly to preserve life, and to restrain those fierce passions which roving habits excite.

Another curious feature of Bedaween government is that by which the supreme authority changes hands provisionally when a sheikh is too old to lead the tribe in war, or another is considered a more fit and successful leader, to be restored to him at the conclusion of peace. I know an instance in which an elder brother is the sheikh in favour of his prudence, and a younger brother is the military chief by right of greater valour. The Arab tribes consider this practice to be a guarantee for the liberty of the subject, inasmuch as power is not concentrated, and jealousy prevents a coalition against popular freedom. Jedaan is the military leader of his tribe, and his uncle Deham the sheikh; but in this case the judgment and discretion of the former give him power even when not engaged in war. They are not on good terms, and when Jedaan sees his influence over the tribe diminished by intrigues on the part of Deham, who is a cunning old man, he always looks for

another tribe to quarrel with, and by declaring war consolidates his authority.

A further check to the assumption of absolute power is found in the judicial functions of a member of each tribe, distinguished for sagacity, whose award is without appeal, even when it condemns the sheikh, or aghid, as the military chief is called. This magistrate enjoys the title of cadi, and is generally no mean lawyer. In the Fedan tribe there is really an upright judge, an old man, by name Jemaijem, whom I have heard decide cases with the greatest acumen and impartiality. He can neither read nor write, but he is gifted with a prodigious memory, and quotes a host of precedents in the point of law at issue, preparing his audience for his verdict before pronouncing it.

The Anezi tribe is subdivided into many sections, with distinctive appellations, such as Fedan, Sebaa, Erfuddi, Ibn Haddal, Amarat, Weled Ali, and Beni Sachar. Other tribes, the Aghedat, Sochni, and Aghel, live under their protection; the two former occupying the country between Palmyra and the Euphrates, where they burn herbs producing soda for sale in the towns, and the latter moving from camp to camp to act as brokers for the merchants of Aleppo and Bagdad, while they also form large caravans of camels for the transport of goods between those two marts. The Anezi are in the habit of tracing every year a great migratory orbit, which takes them to Aleppo in summer, towards Urfa, Diarbakir, Moossul, and Bagdad in winter, and leads them round by the

southern regions of the desert, passing near Damascus, Homs, and Hama, back to Aleppo. They provide themselves with grain and manufactured goods at the last-named city, and with dates at Bagdad, selling their wool, butter, lambs, young camels, and horses, to raise money for these purchases. All their other wants are supplied by the flocks and herds which they rear, and which oblige them to wander for ever in that vast circle to avoid the barren centre of the desert, and to find fresh pasture-grounds on its skirts in succession when they are exhausted.

As regards their honesty, I can say that I have been a good deal amongst them, and I feel more disposed to join those who have extolled their few virtues than the exponents of their many vices. One cannot with any degree of fairness throw all the responsibility of Bedaween misdeeds on their perpetrators. Treated as they have been, it is only surprising that they should have retained any virtues at all, and should not have pushed their vices much farther. But of this hereafter.

LETTER II.

Camels — Weldi Arabs—Sheikh Mohammed-al-Ganim — Arab Warfare—Hierapolis—Koords.

Hierapolis: October 8, 1858.

I HAVE come upon this little oasis in the desert, and the charm of the spot entices me to remain. My tent is pitched on a soft green lawn, fringing the still waters of a deep pool, and surrounded by the ruins of the ancient city of Bambyce, afterwards called Hierapolis, and now, by a corruption of its former name, Mumbutsh.

We left the Anezi camp two days ago. At early dawn the numberless uncouth camels, squatting sphinx-fashion amongst the tents, began to turn their long necks impatiently from side to side. An old man arose from a group of sleeping Bedaween, and untied the fore-leg of a large camel which lay pinioned. It struggled to its feet, and at this signal they all got up, the fugleman alone having been fastened. As they yawned and stretched their ungainly limbs, the truth of an Arab saying came forcibly to my mind: The horse laughed at the crookedness of the camel's legs, and the camel asked the horse what there was so straight about him that his legs should appear crooked: a telling figure of rhetoric in a bad argument. The old man pro-

ceeded slowly towards the river, uttering a continuous and not unmusical call of 'ho, ho!' The camel that had been tied followed, and the whole herd filed after him. I went to see them watered. An evolution was performed with military precision: when the leading camel reached the stream, the next one formed on his right, and so on till all their heads were stretched down to the water with a receding vista of several thousand humps on the bank. After they had taken a sufficient draught for a week's use, if required, the old man led them off with his 'ho, ho!' to the pasture behind the camp. I was told that he always lived with the camels, and never tasted any other food than their milk.

The Euphrates is about two hundred yards wide at that point, fifteen feet deep in the middle, and not rapid. I had an agreeable swim in it, notwithstanding the crocodiles that appeared to General Chesney in his expedition of 1835. Returning to the tent of Sheikh Jedaan, I found our party prepared for a start. We mounted, took leave of our host, and crossed the plain lying to the north of Beles. Under the guidance of Haji Batran we passed from mound to mound, for these are the only landmarks. The country is everywhere susceptible of cultivation, but of course there is none. In the afternoon we halted at a camp of the Weldi tribe, whose sheikh, Mohammed-al-Ganim, received us with true Arab hospitality.

This tribe does not properly belong to the Syrian desert, but to that of Mesopotamia, where the majority of it still remains. Mohammed-al-Ganim is a remark-

ably handsome man, between thirty and forty years of age, with fine eyes and a flowing beard. He is the nephew of the powerful Weldi sheikh, Selami-ed-Dandan, and had been involved, by his near relationship with him, in a blood-feud with the Shammar. The last victim having been on the side of the latter, and both sides being too proud and obstinate to compound their difference by the payment of ransom, a timely retreat from their vicinity became expedient; and Mohammed-al-Ganim was so popular a leader that he was followed across the Euphrates by about three hundred families. I had much conversation with him on his prospects, and he pointed out to me how very difficult his position had become, surrounded as he was by the Fedan Anezi, the Hadideen, and the Mowali, to some one of which tribes he must pay tribute for protection from the two others, as his people were not numerous enough to stand alone. When the protecting tribe should move, he must move with it, or be attacked by those remaining. The Weldi, moreover, obey him as the nephew of their common sheikh, but they never would consent to be under the authority of an Anezi, Hadidi, or Mowali sheikh. In short, he found himself very critically situated. I remarked that I could think of only one way to obviate every difficulty, which would be to take up an independent position as an agricultural tribe. All the arguments current in the desert against intercourse with towns and Turkish officials were marshalled in opposition to my suggestion. I endeavoured to combat

them as I best could, dwelling especially on the influential ground he would occupy when possessed of grain to barter for protection with the nomadic tribes, each of which would prevent the other from destroying his crops in the hope of obtaining a share of them, while it would also become the duty and interest of the government to give him every possible assistance. This discussion was listened to with great attention by the Weldi, who crowded around us in considerable numbers, eagerly exchanging glances of approval when any of the reasons adduced took their fancy; but I saw that Haji Batran was also a watchful listener, and that he did not seem to like the turn matters were taking. He attempted more than once to put a stop to our conversation, and at last succeeded by saying that we could not proceed farther on our journey by daylight, as there were hostile tribes in front of us, and that, unless we meant to stay the whole of the next day with the Weldi, we had better mount at once, and ride through the night. We could not escape the force of such logic; so we left Mohammed-al-Ganim, who said pointedly, when bidding us farewell, that he would think of my advice.

The sun had set, but the moon was up, and the fine air of the desert, fragrant with the aroma of herbs crushed with our horses' hoofs, was most exhilarating. Batran guided us still in a northerly direction, parallel to the course of the Euphrates, and, as we rode along together, he narrated many interesting scenes of Bedaween life. Passing a defile between two low rocky

hills, he pointed out the mouth of a cavern, which, he said, extended eastward under the river, here at least a mile off, and corresponded with another aperture in Mesopotamia. If true, this might be the passage by which Zenobia, after the fall of Palmyra, was trying to escape when Aurelian's soldiers captured her. Batran told me that, if I would dismount and enter it, I should find thirteen headless Arabs of the Shammar tribe whom he had thrown in there not long ago. On my expressing curiosity as to the fact, he told his story. He had gone out with three hundred of his Hanadi to meet a body of the Shammar which had crossed the Euphrates from Mesopotamia, intent on plunder. At a Hadideen camp on his way, he learnt that the Shammar had sent a strong party of the Ghess tribe to swim the river higher up, and draw attention from the main expedition, as they had heard of Batran's approach. He met the stratagem by opposing a Hadideen force to the Ghess, while he marched against the Shammar. His tactics were successful; both the Shammar and the Ghess were driven back to Mesopotamia. Batran took twenty prisoners. This cave had been agreed upon as his rendezvous with the Hadideen, who soon came there to report their victory. But they mourned the death of thirteen of their number in the fight, which had been more obstinate with the Ghess than with the Shammar, the latter having at once taken to flight, leaving their worst mounted to be captured. To avenge the Hadideen, Batran with his own hand cut off the heads of thirteen of his prisoners, gave them to his allies to satisfy the

tribe that their blood was paid, and threw the bodies into the cavern. He released his other prisoners, he said, concluding his horrible anecdote with a loud laugh.

The Shammar tribe roams over the whole of Mesopotamia, from the mountains of Armenia to the walls of Bagdad. Their number is estimated at thirty thousand tents. They are always at war with the Anezi. Like them, they are addicted to plundering caravans, and making raids on the agricultural population. The predatory expeditions of the two tribes often meet, and never fail to fight when they meet. The Ghess occupy the left bank of the Euphrates from the town of Urfa, the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, to the country of the Barazi tribe of Koords. These two tribes are generally on friendly terms. The former numbers fifteen hundred tents. The Hadideen are the shepherds of Aleppo and Hama, whose inhabitants invest a considerable amount of capital in flocks intrusted to their care. They supply those towns with milk and butter, and carry on a large trade in wool for exportation. They are a peaceful tribe, always submissive to the government, often giving timely notice of hostile intentions on the part of marauding Bedaween, and occasionally suffering for it when discovered. Their strength does not exceed two thousand tents.

We rode on without apparently any definite object. Sometimes Batran seemed to swerve to the right, sometimes to the left. The horses were getting tired. At last we pulled up in the middle of a barren

wilderness. Haji Batran confessed that he had not the least notion where we were. There was nothing for it but to picket our horses, pitch our tent, and wait for daylight. The want of water was very distressing. A guard of Hanadi was placed to watch for Arabs and wild beasts. Batran lay down still further in advance. I went to commend his zeal, and found him with a bottle raised to his mouth. Hoping to assuage my intolerable thirst, I took it from his hand, but, instead of water, it had contained brandy, which he had stolen from one of the servants. The emptiness of the bottle fully accounted for the erratic course we had followed. I returned to the tent, and contrived to sleep an hour or two. When I awoke, the dawn was breaking the gloom which had enveloped us after the moon had set. On looking round the horizon, I descried towards the north something like a building very near us. I roused Batran, who gazed at it awhile, and announced, with his usual sonorous hilarity, that we were close to Mumbutsh. The tent was soon struck, the poor hungry horses prepared, and we rode on hither.

The town must have been large and important. Greek remains are strewed amongst Saracenic tombs. Sculptured sarcophagi lie half buried beneath turbaned headstones with Cuphic inscriptions. The ruins of a temple, possibly that of the great goddess, whose worship at Hierapolis is explained by Lucian, have been repaired to form a mosque, now crumbling in its turn. When Julian was here, that temple, which was said to have been wealthy enough to maintain three

hundred priests, seems to have been already fallen, but the city must still have been more or less flourishing, as he found there the philosopher and friend who could afford to give hospitality to Constantius and Gallus, and he made it the base of his military operations beyond the Euphrates, which his army crossed here on a bridge of boats. The great fertility of the surrounding country, and its favourable position for trade with both the east and the west, are perfectly consistent with the recorded wealth of Hierapolis; and vast subterranean store chambers still exist to remind one that its granaries supplied the populous Antioch during the scarcity which caused the quarrel with Julian, ending in the publication of his witty but indiscreetly satirical Misopogon. Even down to the middle of the fifth century of our era, when Chosroes King of Persia besieged Hierapolis, the inhabitants could redeem their city by the payment of a heavy ransom. Their freedom was subsequently secured to them for a time by the military genius of Belisarius, whose firm attitude, with the Roman army drawn up to the east of the town so as to appear twice as numerous as it really was, deterred the Persians from attempting the passage of the river; this being one of the many distinguished services rendered by Justinian's lieutenant, the great general of the day, which hastened his death by the jealousy of his rivals, though neither through want nor the loss of sight, as a fiction of later times has represented. In the beginning of the seventh century, Hierapolis was again attacked; money or skill could not save it then,

and it became subject to the aggressive kingdom of Persia; the Euphrates, which Augustus made the boundary of the Roman empire, being no longer defensible, in its decline. This period of the history of Hierapolis has left its stamp on many fine edifices, now fallen, but displaying in their ruins the profuse architectural ornaments of the dynasty of Chosroes. Finally, it sank before the conquering arms of Khalid's Saracen forces, when Syria again changed masters seven hundred years after Pompey had overthrown the last of her Macedonian kings. Many are the vestiges of that Arab occupation, but their buildings, though massive and substantial in appearance, were constructed of materials less durable than those of their predecessors, a soft yellow limestone and bad cement, little calculated to resist the shocks of earthquakes, so frequent and severe in this country; and the Saracenic remains are thus less perfect than those of the Greek and Persian populations of the place.

Its only inhabitants now are a few miserable Koords of the Barazi tribe, which is often to be found encamped in different parts of the valley of the Euphrates between Beles and Bir, though rarely on its right bank. They have some sheep grazing on the grass-grown ramparts of the ancient city; and their wretched ragged tents, much smaller than those of the Anezi Arabs, crouch amid the ruins of temples and mosques; the former showing what the country was under the Greeks and under the Saracens; the latter, what it is under the Turks.

The Koords are supposed to be the descendants of the Carduchians of Xenophon, who so stoutly opposed the retreat of the Ten Thousand. Their present name may be the original one, which was transformed by the Greek general and author. They are a taller and better-looking race than the Arabs; as brave, but more treacherous. Their religion is that of Islam, with the exception of one of their tribes, the Yezidi, who are called devil-worshippers, but in reality believe merely that it is necessary for man to propitiate Ariman, the Spirit of Evil, by sacrifices. They differ little in other respects from the great wandering hordes of Syria, on all of whom religion sits lightly. The Koords cover the whole of the southern watershed of Mount Taurus, and extend to the frontiers of Persia in the east, migrating frequently northwards in Armenia as far as Mount Ararat. In Northern Syria their number is computed at about fifty thousand. Their occupation is pastoral, plundering, and, when located, agricultural. From these tribes are recruited for the most part the irregular troops kept by Turkish governors in Syria.

LETTER III.

Persian Aqueduct—Hyena Hunt—Haji Batran—Batnæ—Irregular Troops—Arab Warfare.

Batnæ: October 9, 1858.

STILL under advice to travel only by night, we left Mumbutsh yesterday afternoon; having spent a delightful morning there, in rest, in writing, in rambling over the ruins, and swimming in the small lake. Our course was south-westerly. The first object of interest we saw was the ancient aqueduct which feeds that lake with the clear cool water of a spring rising at a distance of twelve miles. The stream is almost always under ground, as the plain undulates, and a level conduit has been excavated for it by means of shafts about fifteen yards from each other. This was probably a work of the Persians, with whom it was a religious duty, after the precept of Zoroaster, to multiply the principles of life and abundance, fire and water. Aqueducts thus constructed are certainly less perishable than those whose level is maintained above ground by arches; this one must have been twelve centuries in operation without care or repair, and it may continue to work well for ever.

As we passed one of the shafts, an enormous hyena suddenly sprang from its funnel-shaped mouth. A

shout from Batran, and a bound of his vigorous mare under a severe application of sharp-pointed shovel stirrups, gave the signal for a furious chase. The wild beast strained his every nerve, and doubled over and over again, to escape the screaming Batran. On we rushed at our best pace for a couple of miles. At last Batran got a favourable opening for a pistol-shot which broke the hyena's hind leg. He jumped off his mare, put the butt-end of his lance into the brute's mouth, and, while it was biting at the iron spike, he placed his knee on its body, and, drawing a long knife with his other hand, cut its throat amid loud bursts of jovial laughter. It would be difficult to determine which seemed the wilder beast of the two.

Returning to our course we were soon benighted. As we rode along slowly, Haji Batran, now calm after his mad excitement, narrated some of his adventures to keep me awake, as he said. One of these was striking, and I have since ascertained by enquiries here that it was strictly true. When offering to guide us by a circuitous route, passing through a valley called Saffi, where we should find some tents to rest at, a proposal which we declined, he remarked that it might indeed be better not to go that way, because his last visit there could not have been forgotten. Three years ago, he said, in answer to my question as to the visit he alluded to, there was great difficulty in obtaining the pay of the irregular troops. Having at last become desperate, he informed the authorities that, if he received no money up to a certain day, he would plunder the Arabs

nearest his camp, who happened to be those of Saffi. The reply was a civil request to go to town and receive his pay. He went, was admitted to the governor's presence, and was kept in conversation by him until the room, passage, and stairs were filled with soldiers. Batran chanced to look round, and, understanding at once the governor's design, uttered a yell of rage, drew his sword, and, being a man of great strength, pushed and cut his way through the crowd, which fell back dismayed as he vaulted on his mare and galloped out of the town. From Saffi he sent a message to the governor that he might still save the Arabs of that valley by sending his money thither. The messenger brought back word that there was no answer, but that troops were preparing to march against him. Haji Batran then fell upon the unfortunate people of Saffi, killed sixteen of them, and carried off everything they had. It soon became known that he had joined the Anezi, and, pursuit being in vain, no further steps were taken. When a new governor came, some months afterwards, his depredations were put a stop to by condoning all his past misdeeds, and settling his accounts. He then resumed his previous functions, as if they had never been interrupted. I could not refrain from expressing my opinion of his conduct at Saffi, to which he replied in a deprecatory manner that he had done nothing wrong, as he had spared the women and children, and as no Arab ever expects to die a natural death like the cowardly townspeople.

Our horses, meanwhile, were beginning to knock up,

and we were still a long way from our halting-place. We alighted, and pitched our tent to rest a little. We suffered greatly from thirst. Some complained of hunger too, but our stock of provisions was exhausted by the seventy mouths we had to fill, and we had had no opportunity of replenishing the supply for several days. I was trying to sleep in the tent, while the Arabs sat round a fire of brushwood they had kindled outside. One of them entered, preceded by a savoury odour, and put a plate before me. To my astonished enquiries he replied, with the utmost indifference, that it was a slice of roast hyena. My hunger seemed satisfied by the mere announcement, and the plate was soon on its way back to the circle round the fire, where the whole carcase of the unclean animal was devoured with great apparent relish.

At dawn the tent was struck, and we came on to this place, now called Tadif. It is the ancient Batnæ. The small town is pleasantly situated in a grove of cypresses, which received Julian in so congenial a manner with sacrifices to Apollo and Jupiter; and it has still the appearance described. This is now a resort of pilgrims from amongst the Jews of all Syria, on account of a tradition that Ezra wrote his reproduction of the Mosaic law in a cavern shown by them with great reverence. The government has selected Tadif as a central point for the controlling of Bedaween movements by irregular troops. With how much success may be deduced from the following cases in point.

A few mornings ago the plain was seen at break of day

to be covered with small parties of Arabs, endeavouring to drive off the sheep and cattle pasturing there. The people of Tadif, who muster upwards of four hundred well-armed and mounted men, soon assembled to defend their property. The assailants were repulsed, leaving three of their number killed, four wounded, and several mares taken, while the villagers had five wounded, of whom one mortally, and lost a flock of sheep which the Arabs succeeded in keeping before them as they retreated. No assistance was afforded by the irregular troops employed to defend Tadif. They were not forthcoming when their presence might have been of use, although they inflict on the peasantry the burden of supporting them, for they rarely receive a sufficient portion of their pay to meet their necessary expenses.

On a recent occasion a detachment was sent out against some Anezi who had committed depredations. The troops attacked the peaceful and submissive Hadideen, and carried off a quantity of property which they represented, and possibly believed, to belong to the great marauding tribe. A public sale took place, and the imperial treasury received the spoil of the Sultan's faithful subjects.

All endeavours of the Turkish authorities to preserve tranquillity in the desert prove abortive. A battle may be fought with a favourable result in so far as success in the field is concerned, but the permanent effect produced is still injurious. The Arabs retire exasperated, collect other tribes, and return to plunder unguarded villages. The idea of coercing them by

preventing trade is of self-evident inexpediency. It deprives some towns of supplies, while the produce is carried to other markets, perhaps already overstocked. Last year the Anezi, Shammar, and Mowali, got into a complicated state of warfare, fighting amongst themselves and plundering all others. The authorities issued a sweeping interdiction of all intercourse with them. To procure money for the purchase of grain, they sell annually, besides wool and butter, young camels and horses to dealers in live stock from Asia Minor. Those dealers had arrived, and were waiting with their money for permission to trade. Seeing that there was no chance of obtaining it, they returned home; and the Arab tribes, despairing of being able to purchase what they required, took it by force when the harvests were gathered on the threshing-floors around the villages. The Turks pay dear for a display of authority so little in harmony with their power of maintaining it.

This year an opposite policy is adopted. A species of tribute is given to keep the Bedaween quiet. They are allowed to draw the pay of irregular troops. Encouraged by this acknowledgment of weakness, they are becoming more and more daring in their attacks on villages, caravans, and travellers. Complaints have been made, but, to the surprise of the complainants, the sheikhs are frequent and honoured guests of the governor, past faults are forgiven, robes of honour are bestowed on them, and they are sent back to the desert to bring their produce to the towns for sale. The fact is that the Arab tribes of the Syrian desert are not

under the rule of the Sultan. Such troops as can be employed against them are not reliable either for courage or fidelity; and the Bedaween can easily defeat their attack, elude their pursuit, or tamper with their integrity, according as circumstances may dictate. Each tribe knows no authority but that of its sheikh. This anomaly exists *jure caduco*, and it is so little likely ever to be brought politically into notice, that it continues to exist almost entirely without the knowledge of Europe.

The Anezi are the greatest of the tribes. They migrated from the Nejd, or Central Arabia, about eighty years since, on the failure of pasturage for their increasing flocks. After repeated struggles with the Mowali, who are a Syrian tribe, and who disputed their advance, they finally succeeded in maintaining their ground. They pay no taxes to the government; nor do they furnish recruits for the army when military conscription is enforced in the provinces they frequent. They are always careful to encamp at a distance from the towns on account of their rooted distrust of the Turkish authorities, while they rarely remain more than a week on the same spot, in order to avoid attacks, and to procure fresh pasture for their sheep and camels. Notwithstanding these precautions, they are often engaged in hostilities with the government troops, both regular and irregular, when they are sent to punish them for more than a usual measure of depredation. War is thus a national habit with them, not only against other tribes, but also in their own defence when attacked

by the Turks. They do not suffer much, however, at the hands of the latter, who can no more cope with them now than could Aurelian on his march from Emesa to Palmyra, when they are said to have watched the moment for surprising his legions, and eluded their slow pursuit. An expedition was sent against Jedaan during the summer before last which furnishes an apt illustration of this. At the first bivouac, all the artillery horses were stolen, and a message was left with a pinioned sentry that, if the troops ventured further into the desert, they would not only have to drag their guns themselves, but their cavalry should also go on foot. To the credit of the Turks be it recorded, they took their field-pieces with them another day's march. In the night twenty cavalry horses disappeared. The troops still advanced. They even succeeded in surprising a camp on the bank of the Euphrates. Tents were struck, and loaded on the camels. Women and children mounted. Jedaan covered the retreat with a thousand horsemen, until the river was crossed by fording, swimming, rafting, any way in short. Then he turned, and, seeing a large herd of camels captured and guarded by a lieutenant with a sergeant and fifty dragoons, he galloped forward with only seven followers. He ran the lieutenant through the body with his lance. The Turkish commander was on a height with a field-piece, which he pointed at Jedaan and fired. The ball killed the sergeant then in command of the party. The report frightened the camels, which took flight and ran over the dragoons. The Arabs got the camels together

by calling to them, and took them safely across the river under the unavailing fire of the troops. The latter returned to their barracks, announcing with a flourish of trumpets the great victory they had gained.

I happened once to be in a camp which was attacked by troops. The women and live stock were immediately concealed in a ravine, and the men mounted to meet their enemy. When in sight, they made a feint of retreating in a panic. The Turks pursued, and, after a fruitless chase in the opposite direction from the hiding-place of the women, the Arabs put their mares to their speed, and vanished, leaving the former to go quietly home again. All this I saw, and then, going round another way, reached the town. I was present when the Turkish officer reported having fought a pitched battle, and having left thirty of the Bedaween dead on the field. The truth underlying these facts is that the Arab tribes are better mounted than any regular cavalry in the world, but the pleasant fiction of keeping them in check must be administered to the chief authorities. Speed is naturally the first consideration with a people who fight amongst themselves without fire-arms, and, when pitted against ordinary troops, whether regular or irregular, they can ride round them. If they could be induced to submit to the restraints of discipline, and taught to stand under fire, no such cavalry would exist anywhere. But, as it is, I fear they have neither sympathy nor training enough to be of any use to the Sultan, and the best thing he can do is to let them alone, if he does not mean to

adopt a more rational mode of improving them. These fruitless expeditions only serve to keep up their traditional hatred of the Turks, and, when they have an opportunity, they will always retaliate with impunity. Two or three thousand Bedaween sweep down upon the regulars at night, cut their tent-ropes, steal their horses, plunder, kill, and are lost in the sands of the desert before a sentry can challenge. The Turks are no match for them at this sort of work. A common practice of pashas is to keep for a time on terms of amity with some of the tribes, allowing them to trade, and then to incite the hostility of other tribes against them when they indulge in their habits of license. This practice is not more successful than it is moral.

When war spreads amongst the Bedaween, the village and caravans always suffer more than they do from the depredations of tribes at peace with one another. Last year this occurred. The Anezi had become troublesome. The Shammar were set at them. Jedaan marched north to seek revenge. Ten parties of Anezi horsemen, each five hundred strong, crossed the Euphrates, and attacked the Shammar. After three days' fighting, the latter were forced to retire with no small loss in killed and wounded, and in mares, besides a thousand tents, and camels and sheep captured by the Anezi. The Shammar got the Koordish tribes and the inhabitants of Mesopotamian villages to espouse their cause. Another great battle was fought, in which the Anezi were driven back, leaving all the spoil they had taken, with two hundred and seventy mares in addition.

The total loss of life in these two engagements was seven hundred and four on the side of the Anezi, and two hundred and fifteen on that of the Shammar. On recrossing the Euphrates the Anezi found Omer Pasha on his way to Bagdad, where he had been appointed governor-general. He had with him two battalions of rifles and a regiment of cavalry, besides about two hundred irregulars. Jedaan fancied he wished to subjugate the Bedaween, and fell back on the walled town of Deir, the ancient Thapsacus. The pasha sent on a party to prepare provisions there. The gates were closed, and all communication refused. When the great general came up, and found no provisions ready, he took the place by storm, and gave it to his troops to pillage, losing seven men, amongst whom was an Hungarian colonel. The consequence of this was the sudden appearance of Jedaan with a thousand Anezi on the skirts of the desert, plundering villages and caravans with the greatest ferocity. Irregulars were sent out, but the first party was sent back with a loss of five men; and no others ventured to show themselves. A very large number of sheep and cattle was driven off by the Anezi, crops were destroyed, and houses rifled, without further opposition. Such is always the result of wars in the tribes, whether fomented by the government or undertaken with troops. The payment of a subsidy, or bribe to remain quiet, by recruiting a nominal force in a tribe, is a disgraceful homage, which, like that paid to the barbarians by the Greek emperors, weakens rather than strengthens the state. I have,

therefore, come to the conviction that the only humane and feasible expedient is to induce the Bedaween to settle and cultivate. It cannot be done all at once, but the progressive extension of such a measure would be a protection to the villages within the advancing cordon, which might be further strengthened by the establishment of defensive military stations at intervals along its inner margin; not to fight the nomads, but to support the settlers who will fight in their own defence, Arab against Arab. These wild sons of Ishmael should be tamed, instead of being punished for their wildness.

LETTER IV.

Castle of Aleppo—Persian Invasion—Saracen Conquest—Timour the Tartar—Rise of the Turks—Their Decline—Population of Aleppo—Christians—Mussulmans.

Aleppo: October 16, 1858.

THE approach to Aleppo from the east produces a widely different impression from that which is felt on coming to it from the coast. This is the case with all the inland towns of Syria. After enjoying a higher degree of Europeanism, one reaches them in a spirit of disparagement. They appear only as places of banishment. From the desert, however, one enters Aleppo with the feeling of a return to civilisation. Mosques and minarets apart, blind walls and rough streets overlooked, Aleppo is quite a little London after the fallen cities and desert plains we have been visiting. But Aleppo is also more or less a fallen city. A century ago, it possessed four hundred thousand inhabitants, while there are now only one quarter of that number; and, forty years back, a fearful earthquake shook down the greater part of the city, killing a thousand persons, and leaving mounds of rubbish between houses newly built far asunder. The Christian inhabitants of Aleppo are twenty thousand.

The Castle of Aleppo is a tumulus on a large scale,

raised by enormous labour, like the pyramids. If, as Herodotus records, Cheops took twenty years with the third of the whole population of Egypt to build the gigantic piece of masonry bearing his name, there is nothing surprising in so much earth being heaped up into a small mountain. The tumuli are expressions of the same idea as the pyramids. Where earth would lie, we have tumuli; where sands were shifting, pyramids were built of stone. Both were probably meant for altars, when high places were desired for worship. It is thus that I understand also the tower of Babel. Sepulchres were in many of the tumuli, as in the pyramids; and even now, when a sheikh of renown dies, he is generally buried on one of the many mounds that stud the plains, which thus becomes again a sacred spot. The Arabs, if asked who made the tumuli, invariably call them the work of Ghiaoors—that is, infidels, non-Mussulmans—in fact, Pagans; and they certainly were raised by Pagans. The largest of them generally show evidence of having been made into citadels, probably long after their first construction. These are for the most part in ruins, but at Aleppo, the walls and towers have been repaired by the Saracens, and are still standing. There are also architectural vestiges of the Persian occupation, commencing in the middle of the fifth century when Chosroes in his war with the Roman Empire successfully besieged Aleppo. In the beginning of the seventh century, the benevolent Abu Obaidah and the fierce Khalid, surnamed the Sword of God, marched against it. The Christian inhabitants of

the town paid a ransom for the preservation of their lives and religion. Those in the castle, trusting to its steep declivities faced with cut stone, and to its broad and deep moat, refused to surrender, even after the loss of three thousand men on the walls. Yukinna, its defender, killed his brother, a monk, for having dared to propose that he should capitulate. Three hundred Christian prisoners were beheaded before the ramparts by the besieging commanders. A slave of colossal stature, named Dames, undertook to enter the citadel. The Saracens feigned to raise the siege and retire. Yukinna was celebrating their retreat with revelry in his palace, when Dames scaled the wall by a ladder of seven men, each standing on another's shoulders. To stab the sentries on the battlements, attack and overpower the guard inside the gate, was the work of a few moments, and the Mahometans rushed in victorious. It were well for the fame of Yukinna if history told no sequel to this tale, for he afterwards became a renegade and a sanguinary leader of the Saracen invaders of Syria. Towards the end of the tenth century, which Gibbon calls the most splendid period of the Byzantine annals, in the time of the Emperors Nicephorus, Phocas, and his assassin John Zimisces, the imperial army, still honoured by the name of Roman, forced the pass of Mount Amanus, and restored Antioch to Christendom and the Lower Empire. Aleppo, then a royal residence, was occupied by a Saracen emir of the dynasty of Hamadan, named Seif-ed-Dowleh, or Sword of the State, who took to flight. His palace, now a tannery,

outside the western wall was plundered by the invaders, but the garrison closed the city gates, and the former encamped on the neighbouring hill of Janshan, or Isoletti as it is called by the present Aleppines. A quarrel having arisen between the Christian townspeople and the Saracen troops, they fought in the streets, while the imperial army, on hearing of it, stormed the ramparts, and put the Mussulmans to the sword. After a brilliant campaign, which closed at Bagdad, the conquerors returned to Byzantium, leaving the Saracens to resume their sway at Aleppo; the only city of Syria which remained in the possession of the Greeks being Antioch. Three centuries later, Aleppo was again attacked. To the utter dismay of its Mameluke defenders, a line of Indian elephants, bearing turrets full of archers, appeared on the plain, announcing the resistless advance of Timour the Tartar. The outposts were driven in, and the assailants entered the town with the fugitives. The citadel surrendered. Timour called the doctors of Islam to discuss controversial questions with him, while the streets were filled with the shrieks of a population given up to the ferocity of his Tartar soldiery. From the banks of the Oxus came next, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the hordes of the successors of Gengis Khan, and then the disbanded army of Gelaleddin, who had died in Kurdistan. Thus was resumed that inevitable invasion from the east which had been averted for some time by treaties and alliances in favour of the Greek Empire, and which was owing to the pressure of China on the territory of the Scythians,

Huns, Turks, and other Tartar tribes. From the latter race, Syria suffered much. One of their chiefs, Suleyman Shah, was drowned when attempting to cross the Euphrates; his son Ortogrul reached the river Sangarius, where he settled with four hundred tents; and of him was born Othman, who founded, and gave his name to, the Ottoman Empire. From Othman to Suleyman II., twelve sultans reigned, all men of transcendent ability and energy; from Suleyman II. to the present Sultan, twenty-two have been at best barely above mediocrity. The camp was the favourite haunt of the first series; the harem, of the second. After two centuries and a half of aggrandisement and consolidation, follows a period of decline. The Janissaries, who had extended the Turkish Empire when their military organisation and discipline were superior to those of Byzantine and European armies, undermined its strength when their ascendency became paramount in the state. Eight sultans, murdered or dethroned by them, warned Mahmoud II., whose vigorous grasp crushed them, and opened for Turkey an era of reform, with such results as now appear.

Pritchard attributes to the Syro-Arabian race the most perfect physical structure and the highest standard of intellectual powers of all mankind, and he gives as an illustration of the latter superiority the fact that the three great systems of theism which have divided the civilised world came forth from nations of Shemite origin. I made this remark the other day to a very acute Turkish pasha, with whom I was con-

versing about the state of the country, and he replied that Mahometanism, Judaism, and Christianity had certainly all come out of Syria, and, as they had come out of it, there is neither a good Mussulman, Jew, nor Christian left here. Such was the judgment passed by the Mongolian on the Semitic and Indo-European inhabitants of the present day, and it is far from being unfounded. The union of three great races has not formed an ethnological combination of much intrinsic value. Whatever the Shemites might be alone, they have been adulterated by too many infusions of foreign blood, distracted by too frequent uprisings and downfallings of fantastic creeds, to retain any character, either national or religious. The Phœnician with his homicidal sacrifice to Moloch, the Chaldean prostrate before his serpent, the Persian Gheber bowing down to the sun, the Macedonian of Alexander the Great and the Roman under Pompey with their licentious polytheism, the Hebrew clinging through persecution and contempt to his theocratic Deism, the Christian of the East worshipping his saints and images, and the Mussulman in his lordly exclusiveness of faith, have clothed the people of Syria with a motley garb of political systems and religious creeds so commingled that no distinct colour remains. Fortunately, it is now thoroughly worn out, and a new suit is wanted. The Greeks of the Lower Empire, the Arabs who subjugated them, and the Turks, at present dominant over both, offer here a boundless field for ethnological study. Their respective national character is still displayed.

The Greek of Syria has all the love of the beautiful and aptitude for recondite learning and analytic enquiry of the Indo-European family; the Arab possesses the pride of descent, impatience of restraint, poetic imagination, and impassioned eloquence of the Shemite; while the Turk, indolent when not excited, impetuous when roused, devoid of method and perseverance, without taste for literature, science, or arts, wields power with the ease and satisfaction of the Scythic invader of Herodotus and Mongolian conqueror in the decline of the Roman Empire. Abu el Ferraj, called by historians Abulpharagius, says that God gave heads to the Greeks, tongues to the Arabs, and hands to the Turks. Not only in their inherent nature, but even in outward form and features, these three races can at once be recognised in Syria, where alone they meet to form a nation.

The Christians of this province are not a warlike people, like those of Mount Lebanon or the Albanian and Cretan highlanders. They have neither a taste for arms nor any knowledge of their use. Being hardly ever sportsmen, there is nothing to give them manliness; they tremble at the sight of a gun or sword, and dare not approach a horse. This is what essentially they are not, and the Porte in consequence knew well that they could bear a tax in lieu of military service when abolishing the capitation assessment to please England and France at the Paris Congress. What they are supereminently is a keen money-making people, clever in trade, miserly at home, abject when

without foreign support, and insolent under protection. They have a marked aversion to agricultural pursuits. Of the four species of tenure of land existing in Turkey, two are open to them, *mulk* or freehold property, and *miri* or crown lands, which they can occupy by right of a title-deed, called *tapoo*, conferring on them a perpetual usufruct, on condition of cultivation at least once in three years, under the penalty of reversion to the Sultan. The only rent paid is a tithe of the produce levied from all property.

The other two species of tenure can be enjoyed by Mussulman holders only, and the nature of their origin accounts for this distinction. Vakoof, or pious foundations, are in the hands of the descendants of those who bequeathed them for the maintenance of mosques, and cannot be alienated. Malikaneh, or fiefs, still belong to the families of Sipahis who had received grants in payment of assistance rendered in the wars of the state. In all of these kind of titles, the real property of the land is vested in the Sultan alone, who, though feudalism is nominally abolished in Turkey, retains the fee-simple of the whole of his dominions. Unlike that of the northern nations which subverted the Roman Empire in the West, the feudal system of the East secured a seigneurial right over the people to the sovereign, without its being in any way shared by the landed aristocracy otherwise than by delegation; and this peculiarity of the Turkish social compact still exists. Sultan Mahmoud II., in pursuance of the purpose of his enlightened and well-meaning but less energetic

uncle, Selim III., decreed that feudalism should no longer be the law of the land. Imperial edicts, however, and practical results, are often at variance in Turkey. Freehold property, the best of tenures notwithstanding this modification, is thus within the reach of the Sultan's Christian subjects; but the fear of unjust treatment, and the love of liquid capital, deter them from becoming landholders. Their national tendency, also, inclines them to prefer commerce, on however small a scale, to cultivation. Here they live in a state of chronic terror. It is difficult to explain this otherwise than as constituting a reflex of the panic caused by the incidents of 1850. Eye-witnesses of the horrors then perpetrated, and many of them actual sufferers by plunder and violence, one can hardly be surprised at their systematic concealment of wealth, and seclusion of their families in the Christian quarters of the towns. Before the Egyptian occupation of Syria, in 1832, the native Christians had grounds of alarm and complaint which cannot now be adduced. They were not allowed to ride through the streets, or to walk in the gardens. Rich merchants were fain to dress in the humblest garb to escape notice. They were often forced to carry burdens as common street-porters, or sweep the gutters, to give proofs of their submission, and they were rarely addressed by Mohammedans without expressions of contempt. But the Egyptians treated the Christians differently during their rule in Syria, and, since the return of the Turks, nothing has been outwardly renewed of the previous

relations between the two classes of the population. I believe in little or no change in the inward feelings of the Mussulmans towards the Christians, who themselves believe in none, and they talk of pillage and massacre as being imminent on every occasion when the ancient spirit of Islam is fired by the excitement of religious festivals. Hence their state of dread.

The Mussulmans of the interior of Turkey are a different people from those of the capital and the great seaports. There, a contact with European ideas exists, which is unfelt here. The dominant race is still in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire what it was four centuries ago, proud, bigoted, and indolent. It is not here, as at Constantinople, Smyrna, and Alexandria, a mongrel transformed by the inroads of Frank trade. Commerce flourishes more or less in the inland towns, no doubt, but it is an element apart, which has not exercised any great influence on the thoughts and habits of the Mussulman. The descendant of the Arab grandee, as of his Turkish conqueror, remains unconscious of the gradual encroachment of foreign enterprise, and blind to the rise of Christian ascendency. The traditions of the two great factions which have always divided Mohammedan society, the green-turbaned Shereefs claiming kindred with the prophet, and the fierce Janissaries trusting only to the favour of sultans, though forgotten on the coasts, are still fresh inland. In vain one talks to a Mussulman here of the altered circumstances of Turkey, which appear incredible to him; and he continues to live on in his narrow circle of contemptuous

exclusiveness, animated only by personal and party rivalries. His religion, essentially a religion of pride, forbids his admitting the possibility of Christianity, which he knows to be a religion of humility, ever becoming compatible with power abroad or prosperity at home. The condition of this northern capital of Syria is thus a remnant of what Turkey has been, rather than a production of any new system or influence. The Sultan's authority is represented by a governor-general, who puts his seal to all acts of the administration, which is practically in the hands of the Ayans or notables of the town. These latter are always squabbling amongst themselves for a predominance of power. Few pashas have the energy or patriotism to resist their usurpation. They might oppose it successfully, were they so inclined. In 1815, when Chapanoglu, the deposed Prince of Yuzkat, was sent to govern Northern Syria, thirty of the Ayans were summoned to his presence, and summarily beheaded. In 1819, the different local parties united against his successor, whom they murdered for levying a house-tax; and the town was besieged for four months by the Sultan's troops before order could be restored. The vigour of the Egyptian government kept the Ayans in subjection from 1832 to 1841, but, when Syria again fell under Turkish rule, their rebellious and overbearing spirit was unchecked, and in 1850 it went so far as to produce bloodshed. That spirit is fed by the weakness of Turkish governors, and by the encouragement found in the non-realisation of the

various reforms which have been decreed. The Mussulman here has thus seen nothing to corroborate the statements made of Turkey having entered a new era of her existence as an empire. He falls back on his old traditional sturdiness, and remains what he was in her period of barbaric power.

LETTER V.

Effects of the Crimean War—Financial Administration—Taxation—Provincial Councils—Tithe Farming—Sipahis—Road-making—Police—Judicial Establishment.

Aleppo: October 22, 1858.

THE intelligence of the bombardment of Jedda, and execution of the instigators of the massacre, has created a strong sensation in Syria. The effect produced seems to be favourable to the repression of seditious movements on the part of the Mussulman population. Some few of the influential inhabitants of the towns attempted at first to talk of the disgrace inflicted on Islam, but a salutary fear of sharing the fate of the ringleaders at Jedda prevents such insinuations from finding an echo amongst the people. This city is quiet, if the absence of overt turbulence can be called tranquillity. But there are several quarters whence a storm may emerge at any moment. One of them is the great distress in which the poorer classes are plunged. This is a somewhat new feature in Turkey, where existence is so easy that little indigence has hitherto been noticed. A bread riot is a thing quite unheard of in this country, and yet the crowds daily gathered round the bakers' shops and corn stores portend nothing less. No steps are taken to

avert the evil, although the price of provisions is already very high. The Turks generally trust to the chapter of accidents, and it is astonishing how often their administration, both provincial and metropolitan, scrambles through its difficulties, and sometimes even stumbles into success. If it be true, as has been said, that, ever since the birth of society, the chief agency by which great changes have been effected in the world is that of war, then should we have the right to expect a complete metamorphosis of Turkey after the momentous incidents of the last five years. But we learn from all history, sacred as well as profane, that war, be its immediate object the increase of territory, the overthrow of a dynasty, the establishment of a principle, or other national interest whatsoever, leaves consequences in no way connected with the cause of contention, whether concurrent with success or with failure, to baffle and mystify all human foresight. The results of the Crimean war seem to me to furnish a case in point. A paltry squabble between the Greek and Roman Catholic monks at Jerusalem produced a mighty struggle, involving the chances of life or death to empires. For a time, the question of a key of one church and a silver star in another was but as a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand. It soon swelled and darkened, however, engulfing almost the whole of Europe in its gloom and devastation. The sky once clear again, the contending states, having gathered what lesson they could, each after its kind, turned to the consideration of the future arising out of their

war. The first statesmen of the world assembled at Paris. Stipulations were signed and sealed. The Sultan secured the civil and religious liberty of all classes and creeds amongst his subjects. Codes of law were to be framed, banks established, roads constructed, and foreigners admitted as settlers by the purchase of land in Turkey. Fiscal burdens were to be equally balanced. The civil and military services, even in the highest ranks, were to be open to every persuasion. Now for the first time had the heavy hand of Western power and enlightenment been brought down on the tottering institutions of Turkey, and they crumbled in the iron grasp. Terror succeeded surprise in the Mahometan mind—surprise at foreign strength—terror at its own weakness. Spasmodic efforts to keep pace with Europe brought about wide concessions to the previously unfavoured classes of the population. The agricultural labourer would thenceforth eat the produce of his plough in peace, the pastoral tribes would no longer take to the hill or road to compensate the loss of a violently appropriated flock, the artisan would have elbow-room for his work, and the trading community would find security to encourage a healthful spirit of speculation. All these prospects, if ever realised at home, would open a wider field, too, for commerce abroad; and Turkey, whose decay and impending fall had been so often proclaimed, yet possessing still an undeniable fund of productive vitality, would be invigorated by the powerful tonic of a ready outlet to attach her to the wheel of traffic circling incessantly

around the countries of Europe. The Emperor of Russia announced that the aggressive policy of Peter the Great, Catherine II., and Nicholas, was at an end. That hereditary system had collapsed after resulting only in defeated armies, dismantled fortifications, sunk fleets, blown-up arsenals, depopulated provinces, an exhausted treasury, and a ruined trade. Alexander II. would prefer the real prosperity flowing from the arts of peace to the vain glory of combats and the ambition of conquest. Projected railways, river navigation, the construction of roads and canals, and custom-house reforms—throwing open the ports of Russia to the commerce of the world, and her land frontiers to the free circulation of foreign produce—were to take the place of the complicated mechanism of vast armies drawn from the class now destined to provide labour for agricultural, commercial, and industrial purposes, while they would also supersede the intricate efforts of diplomatic activity hitherto used in mediation between the Sultan and his Christian subjects. The thunders of war were silenced in the East, soldiers would rest from their work of destruction, and the navies of the trading world were to be wafted to the shores of Russia by the four winds of heaven. On the fulfilment of this programme depended the future political destiny and material prosperity of Turkey. France engaged to abstain from all single-handed interference in the internal administration of the Ottoman Empire, and more especially to discontinue that illegal protection of native members of the Church of Rome

in Turkey, which is generally believed to have been in a great measure instrumental in creating, from time to time, disturbances such as those occurring on Mount Lebanon and elsewhere. The other Powers represented at the Congress of Paris had no call to enter into stipulations which can be regarded as applicable to themselves, but in signing the treaty they assumed the duty of watching over, and enforcing if necessary, the strict performance of the international contract by all who were parties to it. How far these respective obligations and professions have been fulfilled, will hereafter appear.

The financial administration of the Turkish provinces may offer an apt illustration of their existing state. The Turks are notorious for a want of method in all their official arrangements, and for a singular degree of blindness to malversation, if not always of connivance at it. In no department, of course, are these defects more ruinous than in that of the public revenues. Surrounded by productive tracts of country, possessing a trade of considerable extent and activity, and amply provided by nature with the elements of abundance, the Turkish authorities have become callously accustomed to the unvarying spectacle of an empty chest. There are amongst them men of undoubted integrity; but they have sunk to so hopeless a depth of apathy that the greedy accomplices in the wholesale robbery of the people and the government ply their nefarious traffic with impunity. The chief device practised is to allow debts to accumulate by

the non-payment of taxes, tithe-farms, and other contracts. These debts are placed to the credit of the local treasury, while the remittances sent to the capital are in cash. A deficit is thus produced in the portion of the revenue left in the province for local expenditure. Payments are consequently in arrear, each sum received being disposed of before it is encashed, by means of orders on the treasury. These are discounted at twenty-five, and sometimes even thirty-five and forty per cent., in default of ready money in the chest. The discounters, who are generally in the public service, though represented in the transaction by petty bankers, watch the influx of revenue, and pounce upon it as soon as it reaches the treasurer's hands. Then, at the season when there are few receipts, they induce the governor to contract loans at onerous rates of interest from usurers, with whom they are in collusion, and the money borrowed returns to them in payment of the discounted orders. By the loans is produced another class of clamorous claimants to beset the treasury. Thirty and forty per cent. per annum are generally paid, and there have even been instances of six per cent. per month being levied as interest on money thus invested. Besides these exorbitant charges, and the loss of revenue by the accumulation of outstanding debts, there is also a more simple drainage by that under-current of direct robbery of the public purse which is rarely wanting in Turkey. The result of all this is that a province enjoying a nominal income of about a quarter of a

million sterling, with an establishment costing much less, annually exporting raw produce to the amount of half a million, and importing manufactured goods worth a million, has coffers perseveringly inane, civil servants pilfering or starving, and usurers steadily fattening on its wants.

And what is the remedial measure about to be applied to such a state of things? Instead of adopting the obvious course of forcing those indebted to the government to pay up, which they could and would do under due pressure, it is said that the currency is to be reduced in nominal value. The tithes having been sold, their purchasers will have to pay at the reduced rate; a rise will then be allowed, and the treasury will expend the revenue at a higher value than it was received. Irrespective of the essential perniciousness of this expedient in its ulterior effects, the immediate aim will in all likelihood be frustrated by the inability of many of the tithe-farmers to meet their engagements on such terms. It has been, however, an immemorial remedy for Turkish impecuniosity, and its gross unsoundness is not yet understood. Two hundred years ago the piastre was four shillings; it is now twopence. To trade, this measure, if adopted, will be simply ruin. Goods are imported by merchants, and sold to retail dealers for piastres at the current value payable in four monthly instalments, commencing after the expiration of four months, and the purchaser may have to pay for them more than he has sold them for in the meantime; while the merchant

receiving a remunerative price may find the coin encashed worth less than he paid to the manufacturer abroad, in consequence of a further change of rates. But it is a loss of time even to enumerate briefly the reasons militating against this financial policy, which is too shallow to require or bear serious consideration.

One might think it an easy task to check official corruption in Turkey. I have often seen it tried, with what success one remarkable instance of recent date will show. A functionary was accused of peculation. Another functionary was sent to audit his accounts. The selection was in every respect unexceptionable, for the auditor was well known to be a man of rigid integrity and perfect fidelity to his government. Besides these qualities, he was gifted with a rare degree of perseverance and ability. He soon discovered that the field of corruption extended over other branches of the administration. Patiently following clue after clue, amid a general outcry against him, he traced all their disgraceful ramifications, implicating a great number of persons in the intricate network of embezzlement and collusion. Witnesses were bought off, bribes returned to those who had paid them, accounts falsified or destroyed, and hush-money circulated freely. Protectors in higher quarters were enlisted in the cause of the self-called victims of persecution and animosity. Large sums changed hands. The auditor, meanwhile, stood alone against this formidable array of opponents, unmoved, and seeking only to

discharge his irksome and onerous duty with uprightness, actuated, as I feel sure, solely by the patriotic motive of furnishing an opportunity for making an example of many who had given way to the dominant weakness of official life in Turkey. At last, this mortal struggle between administrative corruption and a praiseworthy endeavour to stigmatise it was cut short by its summary removal to another sphere, where it died a natural death, representations having been made that disturbances would take place if the enquiry were continued on the spot. Those who had trembled on the brink of exposure triumphed over the conscientious functionary recalled for his zeal. Instead of doing good, his offensive scrutiny furnished an example of impunity, and a lesson in the mode of defence to all practising, or tempted to practise, the inherent vice of the Turkish bureaucracy. A more striking illustration of the extreme difficulty attending all attempts to arrest the downward course of internal decline in the Ottoman Empire could not well be conceived.

The tithe of agricultural produce is the main source of revenue. It is collected by speculators, who purchase from the government the right of collection, hoping to receive from cultivators a greater amount than the price paid. When the tithes are about to be thus farmed, an auction is announced, dividing the villages and districts into lots. Each member of the provincial council selects the lot he wishes to purchase, and puts forward a retainer to bid for it under his own guarantee for its payment. All the members

agree not to compete with each other, and to use their best endeavours to deter others from bidding. When the highest price is obtained, the governor consults the council, which declares it to be the full value, and a profitable investment is secured to the councillor whose turn has come. Then follows extortion in the villages. There are instances of thirty-five per cent. being taken instead of ten. The peasant is, moreover, forced to convey the collector's share to the town without remuneration, to feed his numerous satellites, to bring him presents of lambs, poultry, and forage for his horses, which are not subject to the payment of tithes. There is no possibility of redress. The voice of the all-powerful council drowns that of every complainant, be his complaint ever so well founded. The governor may hear of it, but he shrugs his shoulders, while the public revenue suffers, the people are oppressed, and the provincial council enriched.

The land taxes are further diminished by the removal of boundaries. A village, for instance, which has to pay a tithe of its produce is surrounded by others, which have been devoted to the support of mosques, or are held on feudal tenure without assessment; their holders are notables of the towns, from whose number the councillors are drawn; and encroachment sometimes goes so far as to blot out the official existence of the surrounded village, the tithes of which are clubbed with those condoned as belonging to the privileged tenures. The encroachers occasionally quarrel over the spoil. When recriminations reach the point

of establishing the right of the government to the tithes thus usurped, the litigants generally come to some arrangement, and the village suddenly vanishes, to be no more heard of until they quarrel again. These cases, however, may not recur, as the Sipahis, whose feudal rights were nominally abrogated all over Turkey in the commencement of the present reign, had succeeded in maintaining their position in return for service while protecting the great annual caravan of Mussulman pilgrims to Mecca. That service, when rendered at all, was of little efficacy, and, after a robbery committed last year in this neighbourhood, when the Soor Emini, or leader of the pilgrimage, was murdered, the Porte has very properly put an end to the corresponding privilege by incorporating the feudal taxation with the ordinary tithes. It remains to be seen, nevertheless, whether or not this enactment will be practically carried out, for it will meet with every opposition that Oriental chicane can devise to defeat it. The intention of the government is that regular troops should escort the caravans of pilgrims, which will have the effect of adding about four thousand pounds sterling per annum to the provincial revenue. The rights of pious foundations are still intact, but the day must come, and is perhaps not distant, when the government will appropriate them, and the maintenance of the religious establishment devolve on the State, to the great advantage of the revenues.

The trabieh, or house-tax, is not farmed, but annually claimed in advance from householders by the chief

of each quarter of the towns. There is some degree of injustice also in this mode of collection, for that dignitary does not always hesitate to assess the property of Christians at a rate beyond its real value, making a corresponding reduction in the estimate of that of his own community. This hardship is, of course, not suffered by the Christians where they occupy separate quarters under chiefs of their own, whose distribution is more equitable.

A new tax has been decreed, an *ad valorem* duty of twenty per cent. on spirituous liquors, to be levied not only on those distilled for sale, but also on such as are intended for domestic consumption. Great distilleries do not exist in Turkey, and small quantities of arrak are made with the refuse of grapes after wine has been extracted from them. Now, to enter private houses by authority, and measure the spirituous liquors found in them, is a very different thing from taking tithes of agricultural produce on the open threshing floors that surround the villages. Annoyance may be purposely given on unfounded suspicions in a country so full of family feuds, and a system of domiciliary visits is repugnant to the ideas and habits of an Eastern people. Feelings of outraged privacy cannot fail to resent the violation of the domestic sanctuary, especially when a payment has to be avoided.

The bedelieh askerieh, or tax in lieu of military service, is drawn exclusively from the Christian population. That the principle is a just one, is readily admitted, but fault is found with the mode of its appli-

cation. The Christians think they should not be called upon to pay the tax when the conscription is not in activity. If the Mussulmans give men, it is fair to take money from the Christians, while, by levying the tax from one class without enlisting recruits from the other, the government relieves the Mussulman population of a burden which it throws on the Christian communities; professing, at the same time, to favour the latter by abolishing the kharadj, or former capitation tax. That tax amounted to a hundred thousand piastres in this province: two hundred and forty thousand piastres are now claimed, in lieu of forty-eight soldiers at five thousand piastres each. This appears the more onerous from the change having been represented as a boon granted by the Sultan to his Christian subjects under pressure from abroad. It does not amount to much, however—only two shillings per head per annum. I believe that, in comparison with other countries, the population of Turkey is on the whole lightly taxed. But there is no people on earth more remarkable for what Lord Castlereagh called an ignorant impatience of taxation than Eastern Christians.

Besides an improved collection, and the appropriation of mosque property, the chief desideratum for increasing the revenues is road-making. The country is impoverished by the decline of exportation on account of the difficulty and expense of conveying produce from the interior to the coast, which often exceeds its first price. Money thus leaving Turkey by importa-

tion of foreign goods, does not return by any exchange of commodities with other nations in an equal, not to say a superior, *ratio*. Yet, not only is nothing done for the construction of roads, but even the existing mule-tracks are not protected from plunderers. The government, too, impedes the movement of merchandise without the least scruple, on every occasion when troops or pashas travel, by seizing all the beasts of burden to be found, sometimes even when they are actually laden by the merchants. This evil is not confined to the mere number of animals required for the public service, because it is made an opportunity for gain by the police officers, who take possession of whole caravans of mules and camels, releasing those whose owners bribe them. Thus, when a hundred animals are wanted, a thousand may be seized, and perhaps five thousand are concealed, their drivers not daring to approach the towns until the demand has ceased.

The working of the provincial councils, as I have already explained in part, is very defective. As a first step in the career of reform, much was expected from their organisation. But it is now abundantly demonstrated by its mode of action that, however beneficial it may be in other countries and under different circumstances, it was adopted prematurely here, being incompatible with the stage of political education at which the population had arrived, and not in the least in harmony with their social condition. I allude, of course, only to the provincial population of Turkey, for

that of the capital is in a widely different state, and seems to belong to another age. Those who judge the former by the latter, and write on the shores of the Bosphorus sanguine disquisitions, inspired by the more advanced and intelligent members of the patriotic party amongst Ottoman statesmen, on the prosperity of the rural class, the safety of life, honour, and property, and on the great and favourable changes which have taken place within the last twenty years, deceive themselves and others in so far as the provinces of the empire are concerned. I used to be one of those myself, but a deeper insight into the state of the interior of Turkey has since then forced me to give up some of the bright theories I indulged in. I now see that the great change to the agricultural population, which was often oppressed by a pasha cruel and rapacious, is the substitution of fifteen or twenty councillors, always greedy of gain, full of enmities, and more skilled by local knowledge to oppress whenever oppression is safe and profitable. It is idle to talk of the influence of Christian members of provincial councils, for they hardly presume even to sit in the presence of their Mussulman colleagues, and never venture to express dissent, calculated though the decision may be to fall heavily on their own constituents. These councils, in point of fact, hamper a good governor without acting as a check on a bad one. They are, in addition to this, a new source of evil in themselves. Men of public spirit and integrity are not to be found in the class of notables in the interior. The councils are conse-

quently composed of unscrupulous speculators. They do not give themselves the trouble to attend their sittings unless they have some personal interests to further. Collusion supplies the means of serving such interests, and pashas are powerless, when willing, to cope with their deep collective chicanery. Possessed of great experience, wielding a dangerous ascendency over the people, and well versed in all the trickery of the East, they rarely fail to reduce the best-intentioned governor to the condition of an instrument in their hands. He is soon made to feel the weight of their displeasure, and the value of their support, by the unwise credit given at Constantinople to their censure or approbation, and he then resigns himself to let them govern the province in his stead. The same familiar phases of such struggles, with the same results, have come under my notice in the provinces of European Turkey and Asia Minor, as now in Syria. Still the agricultural population is not immersed in that hopeless state of destitution that might be expected under these conditions: so fertile is the soil, so frugal the labourer. I have also too great a respect for municipal institutions to condemn them entirely here, even when convinced that they are far from working well. I therefore regard the formation of provincial councils as an experiment which has not been successful only because it was made in too precipitate a manner. The tyranny of some of the pashas of the old school called for a counterpoise: the remedy has outweighed the evil. For each tyrant we have many tyrants, all seeking their own advantage,

and every one of them inferior to the pasha in qualifications for government. Were the practice of sending memorials to the Porte, laudatory as well as censorious, put a stop to, and were the desired control over governors exercised by inspectors of high rank instead of by local magistrates, I am inclined to think that these councils might still assume the place in the mechanism of provincial government they were meant to occupy. The feudal system of the East had degenerated when it produced the great barons of Turkey in the commencement of the present century. Ali Tepedeleni of Janina, Ali of Stolatz, Kara Osmanoglu of Magnesia, Chapanoglu of Yuzkat, Haznadaroglu of the Djanik, and others, had reduced the mass of the people to a state of actual servitude. All spirit of industry was crushed out of them by the narrow maxims of a military aristocracy. The country was on the verge of ruin. It was saved by the destruction of the Janissaries, the formation of a regular army, and the abolition of feudalism. To prevent a relapse under another form to the evils remedied, the provincial councils inaugurated the reign of principles based on the ancient municipal system. But the new institutions were not regulated so as to be consonant with the social and political state of the country. The pendulum has to be brought back to its centre after an equally pernicious vibration on either side. In saying that Turkey was saved by the first reforms, I do not mean to say more than that the evil day was then postponed. Facts are too stubborn for me to hope any longer for her regeneration as a result of her

present policy and under the present *régime*. The only old empire in all history that has ever become new is the Mogul empire, and to that end it had to become British. Until some such change of masters, or modification of the dominant class, come over Turkey, there can be no reasonable chance for her. The whole vast assemblage of heterogeneous peoples under the Sultan's sway have lost confidence in his rule. Promised immunities and acts of justice remain unrealised, and Turkish and Punic faith have come to be synonymous terms in their estimation. But a change of masters and systems is commonly acceptable to subject nations: the elements of prosperity and power are certainly in existence, though dormant; and the motley population of this worn-out tottering empire may one day joyfully blossom into another India under some new form of rule.

The next in importance of the details of provincial misgovernment in Turkey appears to me to be the mode of conducting the police establishment. It not only forms by its professed organisation one of the chief items of expenditure, and accordingly one of the most assiduously cultivated fields for peculation, but also leaves, by its inefficient operation, life and property lamentably insecure. In this province an irregular force of two thousand men is allowed for the protection of the towns and villages. This force consists of twenty troops, each under the command of a dehlibash or captain. The pay of the corps is regularly charged to the government, but its full existence is confined to

the muster-rolls. The captain presents his monthly pay-list, and receives an order on the treasury for the amount. On application there, he is told there is no money in the chest. A discounter, often official, makes an offer for the order, which is accepted, and then the balance is paid—perhaps out of the empty chest. Receiving thus only enough to pay sixty or seventy of his hundred men, the captain can hardly be expected to keep the whole number. He may even do a little business on his own account, and, encouraged by the example of the payment being sufficient for only two-thirds of his troop, he does not see any reason for keeping more than one-third. Then, his appointment having cost him a large bribe to some influential member of the provincial council, which sum he has borrowed from a usurer on condition that the latter shall reimburse himself with enormous interest by drawing the pay of a fixed number of nominal troopers, the unfortunate troop is condemned to a further reduction of its numerical strength. The day of muster and inspection comes round. This does not matter in the least. Young men of ragged outfit and martial bearing are always to be found in the streets, ready for any job by the day. Horses are easily borrowed or hired. The formality of verifying the numbers in the ranks is perfectly understood by all who take a part in it. The majority of the troop returns to the coffee-houses and khans whence it was drawn, and the captain goes back with the small remainder to his respective out-station.

Irregular pay is not confined to the irregular troops.

The regiments in garrison have upwards of fifteen months' arrears to receive. The private soldiers are fed by the government, and their extraordinary discipline and submission keep them quiet. But the officers, many of whom have families to support out of barracks, are exceedingly dissatisfied, being obliged to sell their effects to procure daily bread. The other day, two captains of infantry came to me in great distress, saying they had nothing left to sell but their swords, and begging me to give them a small loan.

The judicial establishment is composed of three courts. The first, called the Mejlis el Tahkik, consists of a president and four members, and confines its operations to the investigation of minor offences, without passing sentence, unless ordered by the Governor-General to do so. The second is the provincial council, numbering from thirteen to twenty of the chief functionaries and notables of the town, which passes judgment on the evidence taken by the first court, from which it is also the court of appeal. The Mehkemeh is the court of law, conducted by the Cadi with the assistance of the Mufti, who is neither a colleague nor a superior, and merely issues oracular expositions of the law applicable to the case on trial. The only judicial authority above the Mehkemeh is the Sheikh ul Islam at Constantinople. The Cadi is moved annually from town to town, while the Mufti is a native and stationary. As a theoretical organisation this may seem well arranged, but here again the difficulty of finding trustworthy men to carry it out is severely felt. The Cadi seeks only to enrich

himself during his short stay, and the last month of his year generally sees a great number of causes settled at a cheap rate to leave no gleanings for his successor. The Mufti sells his fetwa, or written opinion, to the highest bidder. The proceedings are not recorded, testimony is merely oral, the witnesses are often bribed, the judges almost always, and the heaviest purse gains every cause. The entrance to the different courts on days of hearing is crowded by persons making a livelihood by giving false evidence. Witnesses are wanted, they are found at the door, ready to swear to anything for a couple of dollars.

The evidence of Christians is not yet received by any court, notwithstanding all that has been said, written, and proclaimed on the subject.

A commercial tribunal was instituted a short time since. Four European merchants were appointed to judge cases brought before it, with four Mussulmans, four native Christians, and a president selected from amongst the all-pervading notables of the town. But the weight of foreign impartiality and integrity could not long be borne by the majority of the court, who found themselves shamed into honesty. A pretext only was wanting to throw it off. The farmer of the customs received an inconvenient summons, and refused to appear. The president and Mussulman members resigned, and the Chamber of Commerce, as it was pompously styled, ceased to exist. The previous practice was resumed, and a notoriously corrupt Turkish merchant, with four Mussulman assessors, arbitrates by private

contract with one, and sometimes both, of the litigants. European merchants renounce a right or claim against a Mussulman rather than take it for trial to that judicial counting-house.

A new penal code has been promulgated for police cases. It would seem to work well, if one may judge by the diminution of petty punishments. But this may also arise from the introduction of the novel penalty of fines. The power to inflict them is certainly not always justly exercised, and accused persons, though innocent and prosecuted only through private enmity, prefer paying a small sum to defending themselves. In its ultimate result this method differs little from the more habitual purchase of acquittal from the judge. On the other hand, the substitution of fines for corporal punishment tells on those disposed to become real offenders, who are sometimes more cautious to avoid the liability of their pocket than to escape the rod.

LETTER VI.

Plain of Killis—Dchli Halil Aga—Wars of Tribes—Religious Dissensions—Hills of Aintab—Armenian Protestants—Conversion—Abduction.

Aintab: October 27, 1858.

RAIN pattered on my windows, and the morning was cold and comfortless, but it was the day fixed for an excursion northwards, and we mounted our horses in the hope of the weather improving. Nor were we disappointed, for the sun soon broke the heavy clouds, and followed us, as we advanced on our road to Killis, with his enlivening rays. The country was perfectly level, and the soil appeared very rich under the many rude ploughshares which were turning it over to cover the seed just sown. In the evening we pitched our tents at the small village of Bashkieni, and it was full time, for we were no sooner sheltered by our canvas roofs than the sky became again overclouded, and the rain fell in torrents. One of the tents was watertight, but the other leaked, and dismal voices were heard in the night enquiring after umbrellas.

Another fine day on the great plain stretching from the Euphrates to the long range of Mount Amanus, another rainy night encamped near a village, and a short ride on the following morning over fine cultivated

land, then through shady orchards, brought us to Killis. Killis, the ancient Ciliza, is now a half-ruined town of twelve thousand inhabitants. We had just taken up our quarters in the house of a worthy Protestant Armenian, when a visitor was announced. He was a handsome dark-visaged youth, in a rich Koordish dress, bristling with arms. This was Dehli Halil Aga, whose nickname of Dehli, the Mad, is not usurped, if all tales told of him be true. He is the actual ruler of this part of the country, though not acknowledged as such by the government. Indeed, the government does not seem to think it worth while disputing his authority. There is a nominal Turkish governor, however; but he is quite secondary in local importance. He also came to make our acquaintance after the mad Aga had gone. We had asked the latter about the state of the country, and were informed in reply that it was perfectly quiet and orderly. To the same question the Governor answered that the Koordish tribes in the neighbourhood had taken up arms, and intercepted the roads from Malatyah, Sivas, Kharpoot, and other towns of Asia Minor, plundering caravans, and beating back the irregular troops sent to protect them. The Turkomans of the plains of Antioch and Aintab, together with the formidable mountaineers, of the same race, occupying the impenetrable ravines and heights of Amanus, were committing the same excesses towards the south-west. The Bedaween on the east of Killis, after having been so well treated this year, and after having behaved so much better than usual, had commenced pillaging the

villages. Several of their inhabitants had been killed, and almost all their flocks and herds had been taken possession of. The town was entirely at the mercy of the Koords and their mad chief. On a recent occasion, a merchant of Aleppo had obtained from the Governor-General some policemen to enforce a claim he had against a Koord for money advanced to purchase wool which had never been delivered. The policemen went to the camp of the debtor, where they were told that if they did not immediately return to Aleppo they would be fired upon. When passing through Killis they learnt that the Koord, whom they sought, had come there before them. They met him in the bazaar, and dragged him before the Cadi. Dehli Halil Aga was soon informed of this act of violence against one of his people; he surrounded the Cadi's house with two or three hundred armed men, went in himself, and, after expressing great indignation, carried off the prisoner. This state of matters was giving rise to well-founded apprehensions amongst the townspeople, whose only safety is found in conciliating the favour of the Koords and their chief. The notorious weakness of the government, the disaffection of the nomadic population, and, above all, the hope of plunder, would, it was feared, lead to still more serious consequences.

Since my arrival here I have heard that the Koordish, Turkoman, and Arab tribes, above alluded to, on finding that no further opposition to their depredations was even attempted by the Turkish authorities, thought of coming to an understanding by which that part of

the province should be divided amongst them for the purpose of robbery and devastation. Fortunately they were unable to agree, and began fighting with each other. Rival chiefs appeared, too, all claiming supremacy. Although their strength has thus been broken up, small parties continue to ravage the country. This may, I think, be regarded as a seditious movement suggested by dislike and contempt of the Turkish rule in Syria, but resulting in pillage rather than insurrection. The particulars consist merely in a series of robberies, and of skirmishes between different bands of the robbers.

We found some dissension amongst the Christian inhabitants of Killis, chiefly arising from religious differences. Many Armenians there having become Protestants, through the instrumentality of those most able and worthy servants of Christ, the American missionaries, the other Churches seem to have been moved to some activity. The Roman Catholic priests took the field, and succeeded in bringing over to their Church about twenty families of the Greek community. The Greek Bishop of Aleppo sent an emissary to Killis, who induced the perverts to return to his fold after he had redressed their grievances, some tangible interest of a temporal character being almost always at the bottom of spiritual contests between the Eastern Churches. Several Jews of Killis have likewise courted conversion by applying for religious instruction to the Rev. Mr. Grant Brown, a greatly and deservedly respected missionary of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland at Aleppo, and they have announced their

readiness to receive his teaching. The Jews do not often brave the persecution raised by inclining towards Christianity in the East, for the Rabbis have many resources; they can banish, imprison, and excommunicate more effectually than the Pope himself, as their victim runs the risk of actual starvation unless he be a baker, no other baker daring to sell him bread, which of course has the result of making him join a Christian community out of sheer hunger. All this religious excitement has much disturbed the tranquillity of Killis, but it was most gratifying to see one sect calmly building a large and handsome place of worship, so numerous and zealous have the new Protestants become.

After four long days at Killis, where we were detained by the illness of one of our party, we proceeded on our way under the bright sunshine of that second summer which follows the first rains in this climate, not too bright to be agreeable, and cool and fresh as a May morning. We skirted, then crossed, a low range of volcanic hills, stopped to fish in a clear deep stream spanned by a fine old bridge, and late in the afternoon reached a squalid hamlet called Kehriz. The next day, still on high ground, was not far spent when we entered this pretty town of Aintab, the ancient Antiochia ad Taurum, now boasting of five-and-forty thousand inhabitants. The beauty of its situation in the centre of a partially-wooded and well-watered plain has gained for it the honourable name of Little Damascus.

This is the metropolis of Oriental Protestantism. Here the reformation worked out by the American missionaries has its head-quarters, and is represented by no less than fourteen hundred persons. The Presbyterian Church of Killis numbers one hundred members; that of Birejik, fifty; Marash, a thousand; Diarbekir, four hundred; Urfa, forty; Aleppo, thirty; Beitias, a hundred; Kissab, five hundred; and Yekolook, a hundred: in all, three thousand seven hundred and twenty in Northern Syria alone. Education, as well as preaching the Gospel, has been spread to a great extent, schools having been established by the American missionaries in every considerable place in the province. Besides those which are merely elementary, there are theological classes for the preparation of natives for the ministry, upper schools affording classical and scientific tuition, and a girls' boarding school under the enlightened charge of American ladies. Independently of its all-important effect in purifying the religion of the country, these missionary labours are of obvious advantage to a population which has been plunged into a state of lamentable ignorance by centuries of servitude, and they have raised the standard of morality which had fallen to so low a degree. The Protestants as a community are very poor, and yet those illicit gains, eagerly sought by all classes in Turkey, are conscientiously avoided by them. Thus, in trade, to defraud the public revenue by smuggling is regarded generally as a legitimate profit; but the Protestants, having learnt the meaning of truth, rise above such practices.

This movement, the exclusive merit of which belongs to the United States, commenced in Syria under circumstances equally remarkable with any that occurred in the early Christian Church. The first convert was from the Maronite community, the secretary of the patriarch. Employed to refute a tract published by an American missionary, he was convinced by it. Imprisoned, starved, beaten, his constancy did not give way. He escaped, was recaptured, and died the death of a martyr, chained by the neck to the wall of a dungeon. Persecution on the part of the Eastern Churches has not yet ceased, whether directly as in this sad but glorious instance, or through influence with the Turkish authorities; but persecution never injured a good cause, and in Syria it has evidently benefited it by the frequent adoption of the injudicious measure of banishment, which disseminated the new doctrine. The opposition to the spread of Protestantism, though still existing within certain limits, is now less violent, being for the most part confined to the ejection of teachers from any new field they may enter, since it has been recognised by the government as a distinct and independent religious denomination.

A party has been formed amongst the native converts to Presbyterian Protestantism, with the view of establishing an Episcopalian Protestant Church in the East. This idea seems to have been in some degree prompted by the extreme rigour of the Presbyterian system with regard to church-membership, a sort of jury having to scrutinise the private life of every applicant for

admission to the Holy Communion, and baptism being refused to the children of those not admitted. Besides this motive, there may be under it a lurking hope that an Episcopal Protestant might enjoy the especial protection of England. It is hardly to be wondered at that mixed motives for religious professions of this nature should be entertained in Syria, for the example of the Roman Catholics, still openly protected by France, and the Greeks and Armenians by Russia, in spite of the stipulations on that subject in the Treaty of Paris, cannot be without its effect on the minds of a people always anxious to escape from Turkish jurisdiction. Instances are recorded even of alleged murderers eluding trial, not to mention many cases of insolvent debtors obtaining protection from creditors, by joining one or other of those favoured Churches. On one occasion a man offered to become a Protestant on condition of relief from pecuniary engagements; he was of course refused, and he joined another Church on the same terms a few days afterwards. Such proceedings for the purpose of extending political influence may well inspire the belief that Great Britain would be actuated by similar views. The Episcopal party does not acknowledge that hope, however, and attributes their movement to the accident of a Turkish translation of our Prayer-book having fallen into their hands, and to their having been so pleased with it that they have continued to use it in preference to the Presbyterian extempore prayers, and the Armenian Liturgy which is in a language they do not understand. They have

consequently been cast off by the former Church, and excommunicated by the latter. In number they say they can reckon on three hundred actually united, and on at least a thousand more who would join them from the Armenian Church, were they recognised as a separate community. The want of bishops in the Presbyterian Church is considered by them one of the chief obstacles to the universal reformation of the Eastern Churches; and the consideration is not without weight in a country where bishops are allowed to exercise a civil as well as an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the alternative being Turkish jurisdiction.

The precept of the Coran, that there shall be no violence in affairs of religion (the truth distinguishing itself sufficiently from error), and the Sultan's decree, that a convert shall not be executed, were carried out in a case that occurred here last year. A young Armenian woman became a Mahometan in order to obtain a divorce from an uncongenial husband. After some time it was said that she wished to return to her Church. A zealous sheikh kidnapped her to prevent a scandal to Islam. The Armenian priests complained to the Turkish authorities, who had her brought before them by the sheikh. She publicly declared herself a Moslem, and denied ever having thought of abjuring her new faith. Her relatives petitioned for permission to remonstrate with her. It was granted, and she was placed for a week in a Turkish house to which they were allowed free access. All persuasion was in vain until the Armenian priests

bethought themselves of pronouncing a formal divorce from her husband, which they had refused to do previously, not seeing then adequate grounds for it. When again taken before the authorities, she said that she had repented of her error, and wished to return to Christianity. She was allowed to go free, and a warning was published to all Mussulmans who might think of molesting her, that any attempt to do so would be severely punished. Turkey has made some progress: that woman would have been beheaded, had the case happened twenty years earlier.

The state of the population of Aintab may be appreciated by the following incident. A short time ago a Turkoman Bey from Mount Amanus rode into the town in broad daylight with a party of armed horsemen, entered the house of one of the principal Turkish inhabitants, forced the door of the harem, and carried off his daughter, who was famed for beauty. They were soon pursued by all who could mount in time. The Turkomans separated to divide the superior number of their pursuers, who were in sight, each horseman taking a line of his own in the hope that the townspeople would follow, some in threes and fours, and others not at all, while the Bey contrived to be the last to leave the straight road. The manœuvre was skilful, but unsuccessful, for the Bey soon found himself riding alone with his fair burden through a ravine, and eight or ten of the avengers close up to him. When on the point of being overtaken, he dashed the screaming girl to the ground, and his swift horse, relieved of the addi-

tional weight, sprang forward and saved him. The girl was killed by the fall. The Bey, not long afterwards, was seen in the streets of Aintab as if nothing had happened. The authorities sent soldiers to capture him, but retribution was nearer at hand. The bereaved father, hearing his enemy was there, outran the guards, and shot him, with his own hand, in their presence. No further notice was taken of the affair.

LETTER VII.

Saam—Sacred Fish—Mussulman Prayer—Islam—Turkoman Camp—Kilijli Tribe—Mount Taurus—Turks—Marash—Death of Guarmani—Armenians—Governor.

Marash: November 3, 1858.

ON leaving Aintab we ascended the eastern slopes of a broad belt of mountains, over which lay our road to Marash. The first halt was at a pretty village called Saam, where we lunched under the shade of gigantic walnut-trees spreading their ponderous boughs over a copious spring. The clear cool water flowed into an ancient reservoir full of large fish, rendered sacred by some forgotten tradition, possibly that which is attributed by Lucian to the reverence of the Syrians for Derceto, who, according to Diodorus Siculus, threw herself into a lake and was transformed into a fish after giving birth to Semiramis. Certain it is that in many parts of Syria, at Urfa, Tripoli, and elsewhere, there are to this day, near the mosques, large tanks full of fish which no one is allowed to molest, and which are very tame from being frequently fed by visitors with crumbs of bread. The faithful of our party crowded round the fountain, washing their hands, head, and feet, and combing their beards with their fingers; then turning to the south and spreading their cloaks on the ground like

carpets, they raised their hands behind their ears, held them before their eyes to simulate an open book, knelt, rose, stooped, fell prostrate, pressed their foreheads to the earth, sat complacently awhile on their heels, looked over each shoulder to exorcise evil spirits, and rose good Mussulmans to enjoy the simple fare laid out before us. To pray five times a day, to eat no pork, drink no wine, touch nothing unclean, fast from sunrise to sunset and feast all night for a month each year, give a tithe of their income to a mosque, and make a pilgrimage to Mecca, constitute the whole duty of a pious Moslem life. It is a pity that Mahomet inconsistently appended his own recognition as a prophet to the otherwise pure deism of Islam, or Resignation, which he founded, for without that imposture there would be a certain genial dignity about the rest. In converting the Arabs from Sabianism, he did well, but he did not know where to stop. The morality he inculcated was excellent, and it might have been a preparation for that foundation other than which can no man lay. One must not take into account the traditional legislation of Islam which has been subsequently added to the original institution by Mahomet; the sensual paradise, the inferiority of the female sex, polygamy, and other degrading doctrines, have not the warrant of coexistence with the precepts of sobriety, hospitality, almsgiving, religious tolerance, cleanliness, veracity, and prayer to one God, which he introduced in a pagan state of society. Much of what has rendered the Mussulman faith odious to us, has also been added after his death, and it is even doubtful how

far he is responsible for all that is attributed to his life. The Coran expressly affirms that Mahomet was but a man charged with a divine mission, and, when a miracle was required by his hearers, he asked them whether they thought he was other than a man. His claim to the honours of a prophet, as also his practical sanction of polygamy, did not appear until his mind had been affected by enthusiasm and epilepsy, and he had fallen into the hands of a servile Jewish adviser, who led him into a raving imitation of the prophets of Israel, and the plurality of wives of the patriarchs. His conscience, moreover, was evidently not at rest on the latter point, for he never ceased to bewail the loss of his faithful Cadija, with whom alone he had lived so many years, and her memory was a subject of constant reproach to those he married afterwards for presuming to share her privilege of having been a prophet's wife. The chapter of the Coran generally quoted as sanctioning polygamy is the most obscure and ambiguous of that whole collection of mystic rhapsodies; and many learned Mussulmans regard it as a weak attempt at a compromise with his conscience under the commission of what he felt to be sinful. Now there is but a small minority of the professors of Mahometanism to be found with more than one wife. A witty Turk once said that the chief difference he perceived between his and our creeds was, that his allowed many wives and one God, while ours admitted the existence of many gods, but permitted us to have only one wife. It is a melancholy truth that in the East the practice of the Mussulman religion is

purer than that of Christianity, which the Moslems not unjustly tax with idolatry and polytheism when they see prayers offered to images and saints. If we look on that picture and on this, the conviction that the Church of Christ does not shine beside Islam comes sadly home to us. The divisions amongst sects scandalise the Turks. The history of the world furnishes no instance of a creed or community with such an absolute and compact unity as that of Mahomet, while the religious institutions founded by Moses, Zoroaster, Confucius, and even our own true Church, have all been split asunder into pugnacious and mutually-hating communities, both doctrinal and political. Islam alone is still as it was twelve centuries ago, strong in its singleness of nature and purpose, whether as a faith or as a civil system, imperturbable as a half-truth fossilised in pre-maturity. The Coran, like the Pentateuch, is a guide for this life as well as for the next, a source of law as well as of divinity, a code of polity as well as of religion, laying down not only what is to be believed of things spiritual, but also what is to be done in things temporal, requiring strict literal obedience, and never accommodating itself to circumstances. Freed from its jurisprudence and its ritual, the stand-point of the faith is but another covenant of works, professing only to revive the religion of Abraham, revealing no truth not already known, but ignoring many essential to salvation. As a faith it is thus as strong as Judaism, and may last as long; losing, like it, however, its dominant position. In Turkey there is no artificial union of

Church and State, but the two are essentially one, and the Church prevents progress in the State. Raised to be a scourge to the corrupt Christian Churches of the East, they have, ever since its rise, been forced to bear its heavy yoke. In numbers Islam greatly exceeds the Christian faith in Asiatic Turkey, and it is more deeply rooted in the hearts of its votaries. Assuming to be the final revelation of God, it subdues their reason and engages their affection, instilling its chief maxim of resignation to the Divine will in a manner far from being evinced by the Christians of the East. Then it has no mysteries to baffle and mortify their intellect, and it gratifies their pride by making man his own saviour in the merit ascribed to good works. They censure what they call the inconsistencies of Christianity, such as justification by faith alone when works are still required; and, with a seeming plausibility derived from an epigrammatic antithesis of language covering a confusion of thought, they say that their God created man in his own image, but that Christians have created gods in their image as unreasonable as themselves. Mussulmans have the name of God constantly in their mouths, not without reverence, but with a sort of familiarity that we can hardly understand. Salutations, leave-takings, thanks, even the most trivial requests, are all in the name of God, accompanied by emphatic professions of faith. These latter constitute at least a third part of every dialogue in this country. But there is no great thought of piety in this habit, which rather originates in an unholy pride and a defiant spirit. An

assertion of superiority is all that is meant, and a wish to provoke religious antagonism generally inspires the Mussulman formulas of civility towards those of other creeds. Their curses, too, which may be said to contribute another third to conversation, are far from conveying the import of the expressions used, but merely revert to the former greatness of their race, by addressing to an awkward slave, the threats of a conqueror to a vanquished foe, when they hope the fire may be extinguished on his father's hearth, or to a lame donkey, when they wish his mother's grave may be defiled.

We slept at Arablar, a small colony of Bedaween, finely situated on a height; and continued next day our picturesque ride over hill and dale, stopping to lunch in a deep ravine below a village called Karabuyukli, and halting for the night at a Turkoman camp. We had reached the plain of Buzarjik, and, tempted by the grassy bank of a stream covered with the tents of Suleyman Aga, the rebel chief of the Kilijli tribe, we pitched ours amongst them. The chief was hospitable, though in open revolt against the government, and he posted a guard of his men to protect our horses from the wolves which howled around us all night. Our party took in turns the duty of sitting up, revolver in hand, to watch our guard, which might have been as dangerous to us as the wolves. Nothing untoward happened, and we left the camp in the morning, escorted by Suleyman Aga and twenty Turkoman horsemen, who flanked our march to drive

from the brushwood any stragglers who might fancy to attack us. A chain of mountains detaches itself from the high plateau of Lesser Armenia, and extends southwards to terminate abruptly on the plains of Northern Syria. This range of rugged heights leaves room for fertile fields in some of its narrow valleys. Richly clothed with gigantic timber, plane, oak, and beech trees, and affording abundant pasture, it is tenanted principally by a scanty population of shepherds, whose rude cottages nestle in ravines lined with myrtle, oleander, and briars of prodigious growth. The undulating lowlands at its feet display a considerable breadth of culture around the small town of Marash, peopled by the worst of the Turks, and a few Christians, trading in their produce. The lower slopes of the mountain are the orchards of the province. Cherry, apricot, plum, and walnut trees, grow there in thickets. Higher up, amongst various kinds of oak and ilex, are those yielding gallnuts for dyeing, and the *vallonea* whose acorn cup is an article of exportation for the use of tanneries. Gum Tragacanth and Scammony are brought in abundance from the hills, as well as the berries of the *Rhamnus infectoria*, which supply a beautiful yellow colour. The agricultural implements seen on the plain are still very primitive, and the science of husbandry remains in a stunted infancy; but the soil is so marvellously productive that heavy crops are obtained by merely throwing seed into shallow furrows scraped by the most wretched of ploughs, without harrowing, rolling, or weeding.

The town of Marash, known under the name of Germanicia in Roman times, has now about twenty-seven thousand inhabitants. Its chief characteristic is the gushing rivulets which occupy the centre of almost every street. It has a declining, depopulated appearance. The plague, once a check to the increase of population in Turkey, has now ceased to exist and to decimate her inhabitants as it did every tenth year in the beginning of this century, but other causes of the progressive diminution of their number remain, amongst which infanticide, and the drain of the recent war, are at present conspicuous. The Christians are increasing in number, and consequently in proportion to that of the Mussulmans, all over the Ottoman Empire. In this part of the country, however, they do not yet exceed an eighth part of the population. Their distinctive habits, costume, and even their language, have almost totally merged into those of the dominant race. Christian influence is thus less felt here than farther south. The Malikaneh tenure of the Moslem landowners is prevalent at Marash, and their accumulation of wealth by extortion and corruption keeps the Christians in a state of serf-like dependence, with the exception only of the Armenian mountaineers. In districts like this of Asiatic Turkey, therefore, lies the greatest national vigour of the Turks, founded on centuries of political consolidation, while their less comprehensive sway in European Turkey over a more numerous Christian population betrays greater inherent debility. Here are no Arabs, and we have to do with

the pure Turkish race. Those of the villages differ entirely from those of the towns, as the latter do in their turn from the Turks of the capital and seaports. This may in some measure account for the conflicting opinions of the nation given by travellers. Those who have seen much of the Turkish peasantry talk of the truthfulness, honesty, kindliness, hospitality, and natural dignity of the race; others, having gone by the post road from town to town, descant on their falsehood, avarice, and knavishness. Both views are correct. At Marash the Turks have retained all their pristine ferocity.

This was displayed two years ago in a very tragical incident. Signor Guarmani was a young Italian who had been employed by a mercantile house of Beyrout to purchase silk on Mount Lebanon. In a Druze village he engaged the affections of a handsome girl, who agreed to become a Christian and marry him. The difficulty was to get her safe away from her relations, who would certainly have put her to death rather than give their consent. Guarmani found a muleteer carrying grapes to town, hired his mule and panniers, as also his dress, and gave a preconcerted signal under the house of his bride, who joined him at once. Her father, brothers, cousins, soon discovered her flight, and, armed to the teeth, galloped after the fugitives, whom they overtook, but did not recognise in the muleteer singing Arab songs as he jogged along on his panniers, in one of which crouched the resolute girl. A few words of enquiry as to any other party which might have passed him on

the road, were adroitly answered, and the danger was over. The Druze bride was baptised and married at Beyrout. For some time concealment was necessary, and finally Guarmani accepted service in the British Land Transport Corps during the Crimean war. He was at Marash purchasing baggage animals for our army, when a disputed contract was taken before the Cadi. In the belief that his adversary had bribed that judge, he used strong language to the latter. A tumult arose. He had scarcely reached his house when it was attacked by a yelling mob. Attempts were made to gain admittance, and volleys of pistol-shots were directed against the door and windows, but Guarmani was brave and determined. His Druze wife assisted him to keep up a close fire on the assailants, in the hope that succour would not be long of coming. She loaded his arms, and was even seen herself firing from a small window. So stout a resistance made the Turks furious, and the house, which was entirely of wood, was set on fire. A faithful Turkish soldier of our Land Transport Corps, named Ahmed Aga, who told me the particulars, got to a back door, and called to the Guarmanis that he would save them if they would but come out that way to him. The woman knew his voice, opened the door, told him hurriedly that her husband was badly wounded and could not move, and that she would never leave him, but she besought him to take their child, which he carried away in safety. The last Ahmed Aga saw of the Guarmanis was the graceful form of the devoted wife tenderly trying to stanch the blood that flowed

from her fallen husband's side, while the roof was crashing down upon them. Before another hour had passed, the house was a heap of ashes, from which the remains of the unfortunate couple were never dug out.

The Christians of Marash all belong to the old Armenian Church founded on the heresy of Eutyches. The Armenians have hitherto been best known in Europe as a scattered nation submitting to the domination of the Turks, and exclusively addicted to trade, in which they are eminently successful. Light is beginning at last, however, to dawn on the fact that they are a nation, computed at four millions in number, possessing political aspirations, and rallying round one or two strongholds of their nationality. The most remarkable of these is in the neighbourhood of Marash, as yet obscure, but likely some day to bring its name, Zeitoon, under the notice of Europe. The Armenians look upon it as the nucleus of their possible independence. They call their country Haikaodan, from Haik, the son of Togarmah, the son of Gomer, the son of Japheth, whom they regard as their progenitor. They are thus one of the most ancient nations on the face of the globe, and we accordingly find them mentioned as contemporary with the first empire of Nineveh, and as tributary to Egypt with the Assyrians fifteen centuries before the Christian era. They had a dynasty of kings from Valarsaces to Tigranes, who overthrew the Macedonian throne of the Seleucidæ in Syria, and finally they fell before the Persian conquerors of the Sassanide line. They believe that they owed Chris-

tianity to the Apostle Jude, who suffered martyrdom, they say, when converting them. They call him by his surname Thaddeus. In the eleventh century, the Armenians of Mount Taurus achieved their independence under a native prince of the name of Roopin; his successors made alliances with the Crusaders, who recognised them as kings; and the last of them were of the French family of Lusignan. Leo, the sixth of this dynasty, was deposed by the Mamelukes, and died at Paris in 1393, leaving the kingdom of Armenia in the hands of the Saracens, who lost it in their turn to the Turks. Some of the Armenian princes and nobles retired to the rocky region of Zeitoon, where they have never been completely subjugated; and their descendants still enjoy there a sort of semi-independence. Zeitoon is the Asiatic Montenegro of Turkey.

The Governor of Marash, a young man brought up in a great pasha's harem, having been bought when a child in Circassia, comes often to chat with us, and to play chess, at which game he is an adept. But our intercourse, which might otherwise be agreeable enough, for he is very clever and full of Oriental information, is sadly marred by his unbounded propensity in favour of arrak. We dined with him once, but heartily wished ourselves at home again without our meal, as the host was rolling on the sofa quite intoxicated before it was announced.

LETTER VIII.

Passage of Mount Amanus—Ahmed Bey—Great Cilician Plain —Turkomans—Payass—Mustuk Pasha—Battle of Issus—Scanderoon—Pass of Beylan—Templars' Castle—Antioch—Crusades.

Antioch: November 17, 1858.

A LONG narrow plain extends southwards from Marash, bounded on the west by the huge masses of Mount Amanus, now called the Ghiaoor Dagh. Leaving the town in the afternoon, we followed this plain for about two hours, and encamped for the night near some Turkoman tents. Striking off to the right next morning, we commenced a laborious ascent of the great mountain amid noble pine forests. Our steep path offered many favourable spots for the attacks so much dreaded by the few travellers that ever attempt to pass this way. No European had ever been on the Ghiaoor Dagh before us. I suppose every one we met was a potential robber, who, seeing a strong party, passed with kindly greetings. In fact, the opportunity makes the robber here. We had about forty horsemen, sent to escort us by Ahmed Aga of Bulaulik, a powerful Turkoman chief of the mountain, and we were thus perfectly safe. When we halted at Bulaulik, and thanked the Bey for his guard, adding that we had not seen any of the notorious banditti who are so much

talked of as infesting these passes, he replied that we had seen many of them, and that the most notorious were our escort. The castle of the feudal chief ruling over the northern portion of the Ghiaoor Dagh is a fine old building, defensible if attacked, and hospitable to all wayfarers. We pitched our tents on the green sward before the gate. As soon as we were comfortably installed in them, a stream of savoury dishes borne by as many lads inundated us, but we turned it off upon another group formed by our guard, to their no small satisfaction, and we were content to accept only a lamb roasted whole and stuffed with pilaw. All who pass this way are the guests of the wealthy chief, who thus nobly exercises the profuse old Turkish hospitality. In the morning we continued our journey, accompanied by Ahmed Bey himself, with a great many Turkomans on foot, who kept groping in the thick jungle on either side to dislodge stray marauders. This manœuvre having produced on our minds a due impression of the dangers surrounding us, our surprise was unbounded when the Bey suddenly pulled up, called in his men, and took leave of us, saying that we were about to enter the district of Chikoor Ova, where the Turkoman tribes were hostile to his own. There was nothing for it but to proceed alone amongst thickets of trees and caverns in the rocks, every one of which looked mischievous, with the best heart we could. The country is more picturesque than productive, in romantic beauty matchless, densely wooded, diversified with hill and dale, torn up by foaming torrents, and

towering above us the lofty summits of Amanus reared their craggy brows. No cultivation, not even flocks, met our eye during our whole descent. It must then be true, as it is said, that the population of the Ghiaoor Dagh lives by plundering the adjacent plains. The very Bey's wealth can have no other source.

On reaching the Chikoor Ova, the great Cilician plain, we directed our course towards a large camp of white round-topped tents in the distance. Horsemen galloped out to meet us. While their purpose was still unannounced, we demanded hospitality for the night in tones calculated to convey the impression that we had either a right to it, or full confidence in their readiness to afford it. A curious pause ensued, during which the wild Turkomans gazed at us undecided, then interrogated each other's thoughts by astonished glances, and we put spurs to our horses and galloped in amongst the tents. We were surrounded by the whole tribe, from amongst whom advanced an old man with a snow-white beard, who, after hearing the account of our arrival by those we had first met, gravely bade us welcome. When seated in his tent, he told us he was Hussein Aga, the great man of the greatest Turkoman tribe, the Tajerli, and asked who we were. Our answer fully satisfied him and those standing around, who immediately dispersed, some to picket and tend our horses, others to bring in our baggage, while our servants were pitching our tents. Hussein Aga asked, on remarking the latter operation, if his humble tents might not be honoured, and we ordered that our own

should be rolled up again, which greatly pleased the Tajerli, and our journey through their country became at once secure, the bond of hospitality having been acknowledged. This broad plain is the central haunt of the nomadic tribes descended from the warrior hordes, whose constant stream had poured over the Lower Empire with unebbing tide from the commencement of the Christian era, when the Sienpi overthrew the supremacy of the Tanjoos, which had lasted no less than thirteen hundred years, and drove them westwards under the guidance of Suleyman Shah, Timour the Tartar, and Gengis Khan. When the Scythian Empire of the sixth century had been broken up into fragments of the great Turkish race, more or less independent, they covered that vast portion of the globe stretching from the Wall of China to the banks of the Danube, where one of its offsets, the Magyars, had settled. So astonishing a career of conquest was not followed by consolidation of the subjugated territory, and small states were formed here and there. Amongst their chiefs of renown was Seljook, who had been banished from Eastern Tartary for an infraction of the sanctity of his sovereign's harem. He encamped near Samarcand, and adopted the Mussulman faith. His grandson, Togrul, was elected sultan of all the Turkoman tribes in that part of Asia. This was a bold and ambitious invader. Having pushed his conquests to the frontier of the Roman Empire, he had the hardihood to send ambassadors to Byzantium to summon the emperor to pay him tribute. His nephew, Alp Aslan,

the Brave Lion, fierce and generous as his prototype, resolved to take it by force, invaded the empire, and placed his foot on the wounded and captive emperor's neck, after defeating him at Malazkerd, then raised him from the ground to the place of honour in his tent. A ransom was paid, a tribute promised, and a marriage arranged between the children of the conqueror and the conquered. All the country extending from Antioch to the Euxine then became Turkish territory. On the death of the next sultan, Malek, the Seljookian dynasty and empire were divided; the eldest branch occupied the throne of Persia, the second founded a kingdom on the Indian Ocean with Kerman for its capital, the third succeeded the Arab Emirs of Damascus and Aleppo as kings of Syria, and the fourth formed the subjugated provinces of Asia Minor into the Turkoman kingdom of Room. The last of these states, nominally including Constantinople and all the unknown regions further west, was then ruled over by Suleyman, the great-grandson of Seljook, and the cousin of Alp Aslan. The capital of this Turkish state of Rome, or Room, as they call it, was first Nicea, and, after that city was taken by the Crusaders, Konia, the ancient Iconium. The sober and hardy Turkomans had found only cowardly and enervated nations to dispute their progress, while they were more skilled in the art of war as practised then, simple in their manners, honest in their ferocity, just even to their enemies, and, above all, united. The Greeks, on the contrary, were so little of all this, that, when Con-

stantinople was on the point of falling, they declared that they preferred Mussulmans as conquerors to Christians of other churches as allies, and rejected the proffered aid of the Genoese occupying Galata on the other shore of the Golden Horn. Provinces submitted to the Turks to escape the oppression of Christian governors and princes. But the Turks in time adopted the manners and learnt the vices of those whom they had conquered. Indolence succeeded to impetuosity. The sultan no longer governed. Place and power became an object of traffic. A chain of bribery and corruption bound the tent or hovel to the palace, its links comprising all official grades from the lowest to the highest. Insane luxury and extravagance required this aliment to maintain them. Venality introduced universal depravity. Ministers bought their seals of office, and sold the provinces. Magistrates paid for the judgment-seat, and traded on justice. The collection of revenues, the command of troops, the administration of local affairs, were put up to auction, and sublet by the purchasers, to supply the means of bribery. Trade was mulcted to swell the customs dues, agriculture ground down to extract pillage, and usury became the resource and the ruin of both. Wars, famine, and plague, in the quick succession of cause and effect, carried off the population. Brigandage put an end to all security of life and property. The state crumbled to pieces under its own weight. Europe had trembled at the sudden rise of the Turkish power; an era of fear lest it should as suddenly fall and disturb the

European system, followed. After a three years' residence in Egypt and Syria, Volney, a keen observer, announced, so far back as the year 1788, that it was on the brink of annihilation. Sobieski, Montecuculli, and Prince Eugene, dissipated the former alarm; time is disposing of the latter. Those who have lived for years with the Turks, not at Constantinople alone, where their real state is not apparent, must come to the conviction that no sudden fall is imminent, but that a steady and gradual decline is bringing the dominant race to the inevitable necessity of a change of domination in the country. The Turks neither investigate the real cause of their decline, nor seek to apply the only possible remedy. The few who admit that it exists, say they conquered in Asia, Europe, and Africa, without organisation, and decline cannot arise from the want of it, but rather from the degeneracy of Islam, of which all attempts to organise the Empire are merely symptoms.

These Turkomans are descended from those who under Seljook overran the Syrian kingdom of the Abasside Khalifs at the commencement of the twelfth century. They inhabit the whole tract of country stretching from Urfa to the Cilician gates on Mount Taurus, and northwards, and are to be found in almost all the eastern portion of Asia Minor. They retain the characteristics of their savage, intractable ancestors, whose language they have preserved as pure, and their large features as prominent, as when they issued from the Altai Mountains. They profess the Mahometan

religion. In number, those on the Taurus and Amanus ranges with their adjacent plains may reach the aggregate of a hundred and twenty thousand, while their brethren on the level country of Cilicia and Northern Syria may be computed at about half as many. Like the Bedaween, they are divided into tribes under their respective chiefs, whose authority, though far from being absolute, has more hold on their allegiance than that of the Arab sheikh over his people. Amongst themselves there are frequent and enduring feuds, as there are also between them and the Koords and Bedaween. They acknowledge the sovereignty of the Sultan, whom they boast of as a scion of their old stock, but the Turkish governors of provinces can rarely enforce a measure in opposition to the wishes of the majority. They rear immense herds of cattle, which they use as beasts of burden. Though known to be robbers of caravans, they are commonly employed as guards against other plunderers. Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt attempted in vain to subjugate them, and that resolute and skilful general was obliged to admit that his twenty thousand regular troops could not force their mountain fastnesses. These are a ready refuge to the inhabitants of the plains when some act of more than ordinary violence has rendered them obnoxious to the government, and obliges them to retire thither till the affair has blown over sufficiently for them to venture to show themselves again. Less addicted to petty thieving than the Koord or Arab, the Turkoman is more prone to shed blood, and, where

from the hands of the former a traveller would escape with the loss of his property, the latter do not scruple to take also his life on the slightest show of resistance.

Hussein Aga, chief of the Tajerli, gave us a guard on the following day, when we left his camp, with many friendly wishes for our safety and prosperity. We travelled southwards over the rich but uncultivated tract of level country called Chikoor Ova. About noon we came to the ruins of a fine castle bearing the name of Yuzlab; what it was I cannot say, but its appearance would ascribe it to the Lower Empire, and its position would imply that its purpose had been the defence of the great line of ancient traffic, now destroyed, between Syria and Asia Minor by the plain of Issus, on the confines of which it stands. We forded the river Pinarus, and passed the remains of a considerable town near the head of the Gulf of Scanderoon, which does not seem to have been yet identified. Its area is very extensive, and water had been brought to it from a distance by a fine aqueduct, some of the arches of which are still almost entire, showing traces of Roman construction, if I am not mistaken. We slept at another Turkoman camp, where we were most cordially received in favour of our escort from the tribe of Hussein Aga. The tents were full of people, but there was no cultivation in sight, not many cattle, and no appearance to indicate their occupation and means of support, unless the stout little horses picketed before them, and the abundance of arms suspended within, may be allowed to tell their

tale about their masters' livelihood. Next day we approached Mount Amanus, following a track on its lower slopes, with the bright sea gleaming in the sunshine at no great distance on our right. In the afternoon we reached Payass, the ancient Issus, a jumble of ruins of all ages, the most recent being very interesting. These consist in a large fort, containing caravanserais, baths, mosques, and a long bazaar of shops, all perfectly entire and capable of being used and occupied on the shortest notice and with hardly any repairs. The explanation of this is simply, that the want of security on the line of road we were traversing had completely put an end to a trade which continued until fifty years ago to flow from Asia Minor and Northern Syria to this point, where the harbour, without being altogether safe, was sufficiently so in the summer months to make it a much-frequented shipping port for the produce of the interior. Payass is still the seat of a local pasha, who may be considered the last of the Dereh Beys, or semi-independent hereditary chiefs who ruled over all the provinces of Turkey before the reigns of the last two sultans. In this case an attempt was made four years ago to substitute a governor appointed by the Porte for the powerful but rebellious Mustuk Pasha. Before any suspicion entered the mind of the old Turkoman, he was induced to visit Constantinople, and was detained there on various pretexts. He contrived to send secret orders to Payass. Robberies of travellers, wholesale plunder of caravans, assassinations, seizure even of the

government mails, rapidly succeeded each other. At last the new governor admitted his inability to restore order. Mustuk Pasha was sent back, and all disorders immediately ceased. He is now above eighty years of age, but still active and influential. We did not see him on this occasion, as he was absent on a tour of collection from his vassals of the only revenue he enjoys; but I know the old fox well.

After heavy rain in the night, more or less trying to our tents and to the temper of those in the leaky one, we left the pomegranate orchard in which we had encamped, and crossed the narrow field of the battle of Issus, enclosed between inaccessible mountains and the sea. The morning was fine, and we lingered over the scene of that event so great in its influence on the East twenty-two centuries ago. Then first was felt in Asia the power of Europe. The army of Darius, six hundred thousand strong when it left Babylon, with the sacred fire burning before him on silver altars as he marched, the chariot of the sun surrounded by three hundred and sixty-five youths in purple, to represent the days of the year, the immortal band of ten thousand men with golden collars and robes glittering with precious stones, were scattered as chaff before the wind by Alexander the Great with his phalanx of five-and-thirty thousand Macedonians in simple armour. This first step in that wonderful career which diffused the light of knowledge, and extended the benefits of commerce, over the rich domains of the East, invests Payass with an interest contrasting painfully with the

present degraded state of this country. Bishop Thirlwall, and Alexander's other biographer, Archdeacon Williams, from whose teaching I derived the little classic lore and school reminiscences remaining to me, would have admitted with me the accuracy of Xenophon, and, had they seen the spot, would have given up the theory of the battle having been fought on the great plain to the north of Payass. I was fully convinced that the Cilician and Syrian gates, instead of being the passes of Taurus and Amanus, were the actual stone and mortar gates described by Xenophon. Remains of the two fortresses can be traced; between them runs a river exactly corresponding with his account of the Kersus, one hundred feet in breadth; and the length of the plain is a short half-mile, about three stadia as he describes it, with the sea on one side, and inaccessible rocks on the other, the only rocks of this character along the base of the range of mountains. Following the shore, and halting to lunch at a ruined arch of Roman construction, now unaccountably called Jonah's Pillars, we reached in the evening the port of Scanderoon or Alexandretta, probably the ancient Myriandrus, where Xenias the Arcadian general and Pasion the Megarean took ship and abandoned Cyrus. It is not now much of a town, some ten or twelve houses occupied by commercial agents being the whole amount of building beyond the huts formed of branches and raised on stakes above the level of the swamp, which are inhabited by a population of porters and boatmen. The harbour is the only good one on the coast of Syria, but the air is

infected by miasmata from the large marshes around, as is amply attested by the Greek burial-ground, recording many English names during the last two centuries. Three days' detention in this uninteresting place ended at last, and we mounted our horses again with great satisfaction. Crossing the Ghiaoor Dagh by the pass of Beylan, which Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt forced from the east, when it was held by the Turkish army in the hope of cutting him off from his fleet at Scanderoon, we descended to the plain of Antioch, now almost entirely covered with water. Near the foot of the mountain on our right, we visited a fine old castle standing high on a rock. It is called Bagraas. Some of the halls and the chapel, which had rung with the revelry and orisons of the Knights Templars who built it, are still almost perfect. In the evening we came to the bridge of the Orontes, and entered Antioch.

Little now remains but the site of a city, which has played as distinguished a part in the history of the world, as most others. The ruined walls may still be traced, however, ascending the craggy heights of Mount Silpius, and lines and heaps of stones indicate the long streets which Antiochus Epiphanes and Herod the Great adorned with colonnades, and the amphitheatres contributed by the early Greek emperors to the noble edifices of Antioch. The whole area between the river and the mountain is now occupied by a series of mulberry plantations, with a poor Turkish town in their centre. The flight of Seleucus Nicator's eagle from the summit of Mount Casius three centuries before

Christ, raised a city to revel in all the refined license of polytheistic paganism, while another city not far distant retained the pure worship of one God; their antagonism fulfilling the struggle so minutely prophesied by Daniel. That struggle, after ending in the full restoration of the ancient faith of Israel under the Maccabees, was succeeded by the greater contest establishing Christianity, and giving it a name in this city, which received the fugitive disciples driven from Jerusalem by the martyrdom of Stephen, had St. Peter for its first bishop, and, later, gave to the primitive Church its most eloquent preacher, St. John Chrysostom. Few cities have had a more eventful past than this. Its population was half a million, one-third of the present inhabitants of the whole of Syria. Now there are barely twenty thousand souls at Antioch. The walls were twelve miles long, with four hundred towers and only five gates. This may appear an improbable arrangement to those who have not visited it, but at sight of the rugged precipices overhanging one of the longer sides of the parallelogram, and of the deep broad Orontes washing the other, it becomes comprehensible that the city might have been twice as large, and still have had no more than five gates. Despite the many towers, the place was taken by the Crusaders—not by storm, however. Godfrey of Bouillon, and Robert Duke of Normandy, clove Turks in twain, their head and shoulders falling to the ground while their remainder stuck to the saddle and galloped off, and buried falchions from the crown of their head to their girdle, as William of

Tyre informs us; but it was the wily veteran, Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, the son of Robert Guiscard of more martial renown, with his cousin Tancred, the flower of chivalry, that took and kept Antioch. Phirooz, a renegade commander of three towers, was bought by them, and opened the gates to the Knights of the Cross. Kerboga, Emir of Mossul, next brought an army to attack it, but the Crusaders sallied and defeated him. During the siege, however, some of the most distinguished amongst them deserted the cause, Raymond of Toulouse was too ill to remain, the Duke of Normandy went to Rome to ask the Pope's absolution from his campaigning license, Hugh of Vermondoir simply returned home, Stephen of Chartres ran away, William of Melun left the army, and, finally, Peter the Hermit himself sought a field, where penitential rather than obligatory fasts prevailed, for it is recorded that he fled from the famine. Knights and monks dropped from the walls with the aid of cords; and the people of Antioch—as incapable of refraining from a joke, even in such extremities, as they were in the time of Julian—called them rope-dancers.

A French writer attributes to the Crusades a civilising tendency in Syria. I cannot take this view, either of their motives or of their influence. When Peter, the Hermit of Amiens, called Europe to repentance and arms, and Christendom responded by martial and pious zeal in favour of the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, when the sword of destruction was unsheathed in the name of the Prince of Peace to

recover Calvary and Bethlehem, his tomb and his cradle, and thus atone for the general violation of the precepts of his Gospel, a motley rabble of enthusiasts, on their way to the Holy Land, under the guidance of a goat and a goose, to which animals was ascribed an infusion of the Divine Spirit, assailed, in an evil hour for them, the western frontier of the kingdom of Room, then ruled by Sultan Suleyman. Anna Comnena gives the result in the graphic sentence, 'a very admirable mound of bones, high, deep, and broad.' After them Europe's best chivalry was arrayed under the banners of the most renowned princes and knights. In the words of the Byzantine historian-princess, Europe was upriven from its roots, and hurled at Asia. The successful siege of Nicea, the hard-won battle of Dorylæum in Phrygia, and a long hungry march by Konia and Eregli to Marash, brought the Crusaders on Syrian soil. Principalities and kingdoms were founded, and lost, after a duration of about a century and a half. Jerusalem was taken and retaken. Saladin, or Salaheddin, the Koordish founder of an Arabian empire extending from Tripoli in Africa to the banks of the Tigris, after defeating the Crusaders, gave letters and knowledge to the inhabitants of his dominions, which were superior to the degree of enlightenment possessed by the Frank invaders. Thus ended the Crusades, which Robertson the historian calls, the most stupendous folly ever engendered by the human intellect; and nothing remained in Syria to indicate that its soil had ever been trodden by Western warriors, who could do nothing to advance

civilisation in the East because they were themselves less civilised than the Greeks of the Lower Empire and the Arabs under their greater Khalifs. Indeed, the distance now existing between the enlightenment of the West and that of the East has been produced less by the fall of the latter than by the rise of the former. The improving tendencies of Christianity were unavailing to improve the East at that time, because the Christianity of the West was unenlightened. Since then, Syria has not been carried forward as Europe has, in consequence of the debasement of the Eastern Christian Churches and the incompatibility of Islam with progress.

LETTER IX.

Hamath—Ismael Khair Bey—Emesa—Christians—Mussulmans—Agitation in Turkey—Ballek—Kalaat el Hussun—Convent of St. George—Tripoli—Yusuf Bey Karam—Maronites.

Tripoli: December 10, 1858.

IN spite of the advanced season, the weather was still fine, and, having resumed my rambles, I found myself, after a three days' ride over the very fertile but scantily tilled plain of the Orontes, at the pretty little town of Hama. What battles must have been fought on that plain during the wars between Toi, king of Hamath, and Hadadezer, king of Zobah; for I persist in identifying the latter place with Aleppo, notwithstanding all arguments in favour of the other theory, that it was in or near Edom. An Arab tradition makes a bad pun on the name Haleb-es-Shahbah, Aleppo the White, alleging that Abraham, on his way from Haran to Palestine, stopped there to milk a famous white cow he had, the words being also susceptible of translation as having milked the white; and the first word is often left out in naming Aleppo emphatically the White. But it certainly looks white enough on a hot summer day to warrant the name, without reference to Abraham and the cow. The words Shahbah and Zobah being the same, it is not improbable that Aleppo was called

the White in the times of Saul, David, and Solomon, all of whom were engaged in war with Zobah. However this may be, there seems to exist no doubt as to the identity of Hama, which is evidently Hamath the Great of the Prophet Amos. It occupies a hollow through which flows the river Orontes, whose banks, converted into gardens, and gigantic water-wheels render Hama a picturesque little place. Those wheels, the largest of which is eighty feet in diameter, turn with the stream, and raise water in their hollow circumference to the highest parts of the town. The shrill creaking of the smaller, with an occasional deep groan from the larger ones, is not unmusical. Ibrahim Pasha complained of their keeping him awake at night when he was there, and had them stopped; the whole population became sleepless for want of their accustomed lullaby. Hama has thirty thousand inhabitants.

The officer in command of the troops had just returned from an expedition against the Ansairi, who cover the long screen of mountains shutting off the plain of the Orontes from the sea. Ismael Khair Bey, a renowned Ansairi chief, had gone to pay homage to the newly-appointed Governor-General of Damascus, Ahmed Pasha. Another high functionary took umbrage at this, and sent a detachment to arrest him on his way back in default of payment of arrears of taxes due by his people. Khair Bey, when thus attacked, repulsed his assailants, and escaped to his mountains. A military force was then sent against him from Hama, infantry, cavalry, and artillery. The troops entered a long

ravine defended by the Ansairi, who fired on them from both sides, and obliged them to retreat with loss. Before leaving the Ansairi country, however, they went to a village which had taken no part in the affair and attempted no resistance. They plundered it, and carried off several prisoners, amongst whom was a boy, eleven years of age, related to Ismael Khair Bey. These prisoners were escorted by dragoons to Damascus, on foot, pinioned, and scantily fed; the poor boy's shoes soon wore out, and he had to trudge through the mud barefoot, though brought up in such affluence as can be found on those mountains.

From Hama we travelled southwards, crossing the Orontes by a fine bridge of Saracenic construction at Restan, the ancient Arethusa. Late at night we arrived at Homs, once the important city of Emesa, and now possessing a population of twenty thousand, seven thousand being Christians. The tomb of Khalid, the Sword of God, is there, and receives much reverence from the Mahometan inhabitants. The Mussulmans of Homs are not looked upon by the Christians of the place with that dread which is noticed elsewhere. The two classes of the population live in perfect harmony. There are no foreign agents at Homs, whether ostensible or otherwise. This, in my opinion, points to the great truth underlying all disturbances in Turkey. A striking corroboration of my views is furnished at Homs. The Christians there have no officious protectors to make them dissatisfied and insolent by telling them of their rights and prospects; the Mussulmans are not irritated

by the arrogant interference of strangers and the constant hostility of the Christians. People may descant at any length on outbursts of Mussulman fanaticism, but they leave the subject without conveying an idea, even partially correct, of its real character, by omitting the principal feature. There is a latent fallacy in the appeal often made to one's natural feeling in favour of Christians placed in an antagonistic position towards Mussulmans. Nothing can be more erroneous than the view thus taken of the question from the stand-point of religion, while its essential element—foreign interference—is kept out of sight. It assumes a very different aspect, however, when enquiry relates, not to the alleged frequency of conflicts, or the reality of their details as facts, but to the hidden sources whence they arise. The importance of the interest at stake is then found not to lie merely in the preservation of life and religious liberty in Turkey, but also in fidelity to treaty obligations elsewhere, and consequently in the maintenance of peace in Europe. I am not one of those who ascribe every act of undue protection of classes to secret instructions, either special or general. I can well believe that it is difficult to get out of an old-accustomed groove now prohibited, and I am quite prepared to admit that it may not always be followed premeditatedly. But the imputation of motives has nothing to do with the proof of facts, and I wish only to define the practical origin of most disturbances in Turkey. According to the best of my judgment, it is unfair to attribute them summarily to Mussulman fanaticism without

further explanation; I conceive that they generally arise from Mussulman fanaticism under a course of systematic exasperation. One is weary of the very word fanaticism. Mussulmans are fanatical, it is true; and Eastern Christians are not less so; nor are Roman Catholics, nor Irish Protestants. Only let the Mussulmans be left alone, and their fanaticism will remain a religious prejudice, without ever becoming a political difficulty. In point of fact, the Turks are declining from mere ignorance of the elementary principles which lie at the root of the administrative science. But they do try to recover their waning vigour. This is not to be allowed. Discontent must be instilled in the governed class, jealousy and hatred in the governing; both are kept constantly oscillating between frantic excitement and sullen apathy. Outbreaks are the natural culmination of the treatment they are subjected to, and when outbreaks occur, then is pronounced the hackneyed denunciation of Mussulman fanaticism, which rings from one end of Europe to the other; then is the bewilderment of the Porte, the opportunity of such other Cabinets as seek what they respectively call glory or aggrandisement through the sufferings of nations. During the Crimean war, French agitation in Turkey sheathed its sword, furled its banner, and retired from the field. After the destruction of Sebastopol, the collapse of the long-prepared Russian system of aggression gave Turkey a respite. Both have now resumed their previous attitude: Imperial France can-

not afford to keep quiet, and hyperborean Russia necessarily gravitates southwards.

Leaving Homs, we rode to the Orontes, whose course we followed upwards for some way by the lake of Kedes, formed artificially for irrigation by the Seleucidæ, towards what is called, in the books of Numbers and Joshua, the entrance of Hamath, and the entering into Hamath, which can be no other than the narrowing valley of Cœle-Syria, now named Bukaa, lying between the gigantic portals of Lebanon and Hermon, and being the most ready channel of communication between the land of Israel and the northern kingdoms of Hamath and Zobah. We passed at some little distance from Baalbek, which I did not visit on this occasion, and I need not add a description of its glorious remains to those of so many distinguished travellers. To me they appear a perfect chronological table of the history of Syria: the age of Joshua represented by the enormous blocks which must then have supported some other edifice than their actual superstructure; that of Solomon, seen in the massive columns of the great temple; the Macedonian sway in Syria recorded by the light Corinthian style of the smaller monuments with their elaborate tracery; and the heavy Saracenic towers and ramparts closing the series. I cannot doubt, as some have done, that Baalbek is identical with the Baalgad, in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon, of the book of Joshua, translated in its more recent name of Heliopolis, the City of the Sun. Turning again westwards, round a spur of Lebanon, and riding over the low mountains of

Akkar, a region entirely divested of cultivation, we reached Kalaat-el-Hussun. This large fortress was built by the Saracens to command the pass from the coast to the interior between the ranges of Lebanon and the Ansairi mountains. Its first garrison having been Koords, it was called Hussun-el-Akrad, the castle of the Koords, and, when it was taken by the Crusaders, they corrupted Akrad into Krak, under which name it is mentioned by William of Tyre as being in the hands of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, who capitulated after a siege of fifteen days by Bibars. A small Turkish guard now occupies the place, which, from its position, as well as from its works being still in good repair, is defensible, although the purpose of holding it can only be to prevent its being made a stronghold of the revolted Ansairi or Bedaween, as there is no trade by this route to protect. Descending on a cold foggy morning to the valley of the Nahr-el-Kebir, formerly the river Eleutherus, we passed a large monastery belonging to the Greek Church, and dedicated to St. George, who is claimed as a native of this part of the country. Below the convent we saw the Sabbatical river of Josephus and Pliny, which is merely an intermitting spring, whose irregular flow has no reference, that our enquiries could corroborate, to the Jewish Sabbath. At hot noon we were near the ruins of Arka, the seat of the Arkites of early Canaan, which was still strong enough at the end of the eleventh century to repulse the attack of Count Raymond of Toulouse, but is now utterly desolate. After a long

gallop on the sands, we entered Tripoli, with a glorious sun setting on the bright blue waves.

What remains of the three cities subject to Aradus, Sidon, and Tyre, in which originated the name of Tripoli, now hardly suffices to make one poor little Turkish town. But the extensive orange groves stretching along the beach, and up to the grey battlements of the castle overhanging the picturesque vale of the river Kadisha, are worthy of all praise and admiration. During our stay of a fortnight here the weather has been very fine, and we have taken many charming walks and rides in the neighbourhood. The most interesting of the latter was to the village of Sgorta and the Maronite convent of Caftin in the Kesrawan district of Mount Lebanon. We were invited by Yusuf Bey Karam to visit him in his village. Leaving the town, we followed the course of the river to a prettily-situated tekeh, or retreat of dervishes, passing behind the fortified residence of Raymond III., Count of Tripoli, who betrayed the last king of Jerusalem to the victorious Saladin. It is now dismantled, but it must have been an important position in the time of the Crusades. The country above the valley is well cultivated by the Maronites, who occupy exclusively this part of the great mountain. They have extensive plantations of mulberry and olive trees. After a pleasant ride of a couple of hours, we were received at Sgorta by our host, a young man of prepossessing appearance and polished manners. He had been educated at Paris, and spoke French fluently. His sympathies

also tend unmistakably towards France, as he is one of the favoured and most influential chiefs of the Maronites. A copious repast awaited us in his seigneurial tower, but there was a sort of restraint about the whole affair which we attributed to the class feelings of a French partisan when conversing with Englishmen. We tried to make it understood that the welfare and affections of our country are not exclusively bound up in the cause of the Druzes, but it was in vain that we talked of impartiality, and even of indifference; no such ideas can enter a Maronite brain.

This people took its name from its first bishop, John Maro. Like him, the Maronites were Monothelites until they joined the Church of Rome in the end of the twelfth century, after having assisted the Crusaders against the Saracens. They are inferior to the Druzes in martial qualities, but are four times as numerous; the latter being computed at only fifty thousand, while the Maronites number two hundred thousand. The Jesuits have schools and colleges amongst them on Mount Lebanon, embittering thus the more their political rancour by the gall of the *odium theologicum*, into which all the poisonous dregs of past conflicts are drained; changing bewildered Turks into so many Neroes, ready to burn their respective Romes for their pastime, and ranging Druzes and Mohammedans, Arabs and Osmanlis, in one vast antagonism to the oppressed nationality in favour for the day. The plain truth of the Maronite controversy appears to me to be no more than this: a few misguided

priests and pamphleteers of great polemical activity try to make a noise in the world, and, their virulent clamour being repeated in the circle of those whom it suits, people are deluded into the belief that the Christian population of Mount Lebanon is often forced to fight a brave and noble fight for the protection of its hearth and creed, and, when unsuccessful, suffers martyrdom. But if those who believe in the Turkey of poets and travellers, monks and sensation-article writers, would only take the trouble to disentangle such statements from their confusion and clap-trap, to sift the grounds on which they claim acceptance, no sane man amongst them would fail to discern the truth. Gibbon says that a single robber or murderer, or a few associates in robbery or murder, are branded with their genuine name; but that the repeated exploits of a numerous band assume the character of a lawful and honourable war. The collisions between the Maronites and Druzes owe the latter character only to their frequency and comprehensiveness.

LETTER X.

Tahir Pasha—Khaïr Bey—Antaradus—Aradus—Merkab—Gabala—Lattakia—Christians—Greeks—Greek Catholics—Latins—Ansairi Mountains—Dama—Ansairi.

Dama: December 24, 1858.

WHEN leaving Tripoli, we found the tents of a considerable Turkish force encamped outside the town. It was under the command of Tahir Pasha, an officer with whom I am well acquainted. He had studied at Woolwich, and speaks English. On learning the failure of the expedition from Hama against the Ansairi, he had marched from Beyrout to attack them, and was now returning, successful after a manner. When Ismael Khaïr Bey heard of the advance of the Turks, he prepared for an obstinate defence of his residence at Safita, which is on a rugged part of the Ansairi mountains, and further protected by a strong tower. One of his cousins, a wily old man, who had recently visited Beyrout, dissuaded him from fighting, and induced him to retire with his two brothers to his own village, situated on still more difficult ground. Suddenly Tahir Pasha appeared at break of day before this village with his troops. Ismael and his brothers rushed out in utter amazement, but, before they had gone many yards from the house of their treacherous cousin,

a volley was fired upon them from the door and windows, and they all three fell dead. The cousin then went to meet the Pasha, and was installed in the place of Ismael as chief of the Ansairi mountains. The moral of the tale is obvious. I enquired about the prisoners taken to Hama: they are in gaol at Damascus. And the boy? The boy died on the road.

We pitched our tents at an old khan on the right bank of the river Bered. In the night one of our horses was stolen under the very eyes of our sentry; the animal stumbled at a little distance, and the alarm was given. We all ran out, but too late to catch the thief, who made off, leaving the horse to walk quietly back to his picket. Continuing along the shore on the following day, and across a narrow plain without villages or cultivation, a fair sprinkling of both being visible on the mountains, we reached Tortosa, the ancient Antaradus, whose extensive remains form a rich field of research for the collectors of antiquities at Beyrout. The modern town is still surrounded by the ramparts of the Crusaders. Within it there are several buildings of their time, displaying Gothic ornament; and outside the wall stands, almost entire, the noble cathedral of St. Giles, built by Raymond, who was Count of St. Giles and Toulouse before he received the fief of Tripoli under the King of Jerusalem. It seemed strange that a fine Gothic structure should have been transformed into a mosque: I have seen many Greek temples and Byzantine churches thus desecrated, but that Moslems should worship under

a groined roof and pointed arches was new to me, and suggested some little respect for Charles Martel and Sobieski, who perhaps kept them out of Westminster Abbey. The sea was calm, but a heavy surf rolled in on the unsheltered shore after a westerly gale. We wished to visit the island of Ruad, formerly Arvad, and Aradus, about two miles distant. The only boat in the place could not be got off without great difficulty. By dint of insisting and bakshish—all-powerful bakshish, the open-sesame of every heart in Syria—we found ourselves at last with an old man and a small boy struggling to get a crazy craft through the breakers. A gigantic wave struck us down: the old man was taken overboard by it, but he caught a rope, and we pulled him into the boat again. Another frantic plunge, almost a somersault, and we were in comparatively smooth water, with a tattered sail filling to the light breeze, which wafted us safely to Ruad. A strange little town it is, without an ounce of earth in it; built on a rock, streets excavated, and the spray dashing into the windows. The whole population is seafaring, like their ancestors in the service of Tyre. Nets hang on all the terraced roofs. Boats are hauled upstairs. The only vestiges of antiquity to be seen are some large quadrangular blocks with the Phœnician bevil, which must have supported a wall round the towns. The inhabitants are four thousand, all Mussulmans, with the exception of twenty families of Christians, who live in brotherly love with them. The island is never visited by

strangers, but the people seem to have brought back from frequent voyages a salutary appreciation of its own self-sufficiency. A good-natured old sailor has been governor for many years, and he gives perfect satisfaction without reference to higher authorities. But the wind had increased meanwhile, and a formidable swell was spreading an ominous belt of white foam on the opposite beach. To try to go as we came would have involved a certain ducking, if nothing worse; besides, the good people of Ruad would not hear of it. They would show us what they could do. A large boat was soon launched, and four broad-shouldered oarsmen seated in it. A weather-beaten old steersman, with a venerable white beard, helped us in, and shipped the rudder. The long oars bent under the lusty stroke, and the boat sprang forward, now on the crest of a wave, now in the trough of a sea, unbroken, perhaps, from Sicily and Malta to Syria. Under skilful management we did not ship a drop of water; the surf, however, looked awful when we neared it. They turned the boat with her stern to the shore just outside the breakers. The old man unshipped the rudder, and dropped a fifth oar over the bow. Then they waited for a wave they liked the look of, and, suddenly giving way with all their might, kept close behind it without letting another wave overtake us. We jumped out on the sand, and bade adieu to the brave Arvadites, who, straining at the oar, buried their boat in the spray as they drove it through the surf, and, stopping beyond the breakers to

bale out the water they had shipped, waved their arms to us, and pulled steadily back to their island.

When we mounted our horses next day, the strong west wind had brought up heavy rain-clouds, which began to discharge their burden upon us before we had proceeded far on our northward course. We found it impossible to get beyond Merkal, a curious triangular fort of the Crusaders, at the most dangerous point of our road. A few resolute men could stop an army there, so easily is the defile commanded, and travellers have also been stopped there, if the Ansairi be not grossly maligned. Below the castle, there is an old tower on the shore, and, finding a narrow winding stair that led to its flat roof, we pitched one of our tents on it, as being the most defensible position. The tent was blown down in the night, and torrents of rain made a reservoir of the terrace with its parapets, which was thus by no means the most dry of bedrooms, but it was safe, which was a great comfort. Early morning saw us on the road again, deluged with rain, and splashing in mud. We took a hasty lunch at Jebelah, the Gabala of the Macedonian era, where we found a noble amphitheatre in good preservation, and, fording with difficulty the swollen river Meander, we reached Lattakia in the evening, thoroughly drenched. The weather became finer after our arrival, but we found little to compensate for the discomfort of our journey. The ancient Laodicea, founded by Seleucus Nicator in honour of his mother, and to commemorate her name, has left nothing but a ruined gate of some architectural

merit to the modern Lattakia. The Crusaders improved its small land-locked harbour, and built picturesque towers at its entrance; but the Turks have allowed it to become so completely choked with sand and mud, that it is useless to the trade of the place, which consists chiefly in the exportation of a very fragrant kind of tobacco grown in the neighbourhood. Were the port dredged, it might well accommodate forty or fifty vessels, which would amply suffice for the demand; but, as it is, ships can only approach in fine weather, and, when caught there by a gale, are often lost on the rocks surrounding it. For the rest, Lattakia is but a diminutive sample of the Syrian provincial town, with its Christians talking of their grievances, its native agents of foreign powers denouncing Mussulman fanaticism, its pasha displaying a vast amount of zeal, efficiency, and perseverance, in the smoking of his chibook, and all of them assiduously filling their pockets.

The Christians of Lattakia are chiefly a remnant of the Greek Church, which has been numerically much reduced by secession in Syria, consequent on the missionary success of the Church of Rome from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present day. The schism of the Greek community created a new one, calling itself the Greek Catholic Church, but it is hardly entitled to that double name. It predominates in most of the cities of Syria, but at Lattakia, the old Church is still strong. The austere system of fasts had something to do with the adoption of Roman Catholicism,

which is more indulgent in this respect. Then a quarrel about sacerdotal robes between a Bishop of Acre and the Patriarch of Alexandria induced the former, with his spiritual flock, to seek support at Rome. But the immediate grounds of the division arose out of a rivalry between two candidates for the patriarchal throne of Antioch, towards the end of the seventeenth century. The people favoured Cyril, and the Synod of Constantinople wished to appoint Neophytus. The former was elected, and almost immediately deposed to make room for the latter. The Roman Catholic missionaries espoused the cause of the malcontent, and, at the death of the successful candidate, obtained through the papist embassies at Constantinople his restoration to the see. This timely assistance secured his secret adherence to Rome. But his zeal for the Pope was not sufficiently fervid and manifest to satisfy the Roman Catholics, who succeeded in having him again deposed through the influence of the French ambassador at the Porte. So overwhelming a display of power alarmed the bishops of Tyre and Sidon, Beyrout, Heliopolis, and Tripoli, who had already been tampered with. They all sent a confession of faith to Rome, acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope. Cyril also made full submission, and was made Patriarch of the Greek Catholics at Antioch. On his death-bed, however, a Jesuit missionary attending him, required him to confess according to the Papal form, which he refused to do, declaring that he died a member of the Greek Church. This scandal was wiped out, according to the Greek

Catholics, by the consecration of another Cyril at Damascus, from whom was derived the ordination of all their clergy. The Greek Church impugns the validity of that ordination, on the plea that the consecration in question was not performed in a church, but in a cave on the roadside, and by three bishops of different communions, under compulsion by the Maronites, when the whole party were in a state bordering on intoxication. Scandals exist even to the present day among and between the Churches of the East, and, however painful may be the fact for the honour of Christendom, I should regard it as the mere fastidiousness of reverence to disguise that fact. Last year an Armenian bishop, nephew of another Armenian bishop who died, took possession of his episcopal vestments. The Church claimed them, and finally obtained a firman for the imprisonment of the contumacious prelate. Suddenly he declared himself a Roman Catholic, and took up his quarters in a Franciscan convent, which French protection secured from the execution of the firman. After a time the Armenian Church reflected that it was unnecessary to lose both the robes and the bishop, and an arrangement was concluded by which he should keep them and return to his flock. Then the Roman Catholics claimed their bishop, but the only satisfaction they obtained was the payment of their bill for his board and lodging in the convent. On another occasion, an Armenian bishop was on a tour of collection with a relic of the great St. Gregory the Illuminator. He kept the money, and declared himself a Protestant.

The Church argued, that as the saint was their property, the produce must return to them. The bishop replied that the relic was a bone of some animal he had picked up in the street. The want of education is, of course, the cause of such abominations; but Christianity on such a footing can hardly hope to be respected by the Moslems. A few children of the opulent classes are taught to read and write, but tuition does not extend further, and the clergy are generally taken from the poorer families, the chief qualifications for holy orders being the payment of a fee and some aptitude for chanting. The Greek Church of Syria has no national affinity with the Greek people, and are Arabs like the rest. They know nothing of the Greek language, and have their services in Arabic. The country is divided into two patriarchal dioceses, Antioch and Jerusalem, with eight episcopal sees in each. Both patriarchs and bishops are for the most part non-resident, and remain, with few exceptions, in their convents, leaving their duties to native priests. This is not disadvantageous, as the higher clergy are generally Greeks from Constantinople, who know nothing of the Syrian people or their language. The Greek Catholic sect forms an Oriental Papal Church, believing in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, in purgatory, in the Pope's infallibility, and retaining only their services in Arabic instead of Latin. They receive the Holy Sacrament in both kinds, and their priesthood is unmarried. The name of Greek is thus inappropriate. They have a patriarch at Damascus, and eight bishoprics.

The Roman Catholics are distinguished in Syria by the appellation of Latins, being the only Church whose services are in that language. They rally round their convents in the different towns, and enjoy French protection. They have schools and give hospitality to travellers. In dress they are European, but under the monk's cowl they are generally found with bronzed Asiatic features, and the pure guttural Arabic dialect.

Leaving Lattakia, we ascended the Ansairi mountains, and rambled amongst them for several days, enjoying their Alpine scenery during the fine frosty forenoons, and seeking their clean white villages when the sun was low. A blazing fire of pine-wood in the centre of a large plastered cottage was more congenial than our tents in the cold winter nights, and we assembled, squatting on carpets, every evening round the large vaulted rooms forming the habitations of the people. One long ravine, in which we crossed a turbulent river no less than six times, kept us for two days in an untiring enthusiasm of admiration of its luxuriant variety of foliage. The scenery was most un-Syrian in its character: dense woods around us, sparkling streams beneath our horses' feet, and brawling cascades on the moss-grown rocks; then, rugged paths and lofty peaks imbedded in firs, moors of wild thyme, patches of cultivation in the least-expected nooks and corners, irreclaimable jungles and vineyards, vegetable gardens, and orchards, suddenly announcing our welcome proximity to the villages selected for our resting-places. In these we are always kindly received. The best to be

had is willingly given, and payment often refused. This is one of the prettiest villages we have seen. The white flat-roofed cottages scramble up one side of a valley, in the centre of which there is a curious Gothic chapel cut out of the soft rock, evidently a work of the Crusaders. A gigantic solitary boulder had stood there, and they had fashioned it inside and outside into a highly ornamented place of worship. The name of the village is said to have been taken from a lady who owned it, the wife of a Count of Laodicea, and, from being the property of the dame, it became plain Dama. The family of our host, in telling this tale, seemed thereby to establish a sort of claim on their Frank guests.

The only subject we find them ill-disposed to make a topic of conversation is their religion, and they artfully elude all questions relative to its mysteries. Of the state of the country, however, they speak freely. Their tribes cover the mountains extending from Mount Casius southwards to Mount Lebanon. That they are the last survivors of the primitive inhabitants of Syria, Canaanites or Phœnicians, may be surmised from the Pagan rites they still practise, though the exact nature of these rites seems to be buried in hopeless obscurity. Neither tradition amongst themselves, nor any distinctive dialect, throws the least light on their ethnological origin. The Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew languages have so much affinity, that peculiarities of idiom or pronunciation prove nothing. Their worship of the sun and moon certainly looks very like vestiges of the ancient

idolatry of the followers of Baal and Ashtaroth of the book of Judges, while the licentious meetings of some of their sects may be traced to the mysteries of Astarte, the Syrian Venus. Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt, wishing to satisfy his curiosity on the subject, and set the question for ever at rest, selected one of his most faithful and attached servants to be located amongst the Ansairi, and become initiated in their religion. The mission was duly fulfilled; but, on the man's return after a two years' residence on this mountain, nothing could induce him, not even the appearance of the executioner, axe in hand, to reveal the secret. It is well kept, because a violent death always follows close on the slightest suspicion of intended betrayal, as it does, indeed, on most other grave offences among this people. This custom is said to have introduced the word 'assassin' in European languages, being the name of one of their sects brought from Syria by the Crusaders. Robbery is an institution of the Ansairi; they rob travellers, other villages, neighbours, even their father or brothers. Their number, in all two hundred thousand, is split up into many tribes, generally hostile to each other, the grounds of division being those of creed as well as of plunder. They are devoted equally to agricultural and pastoral pursuits, and do not disdain the manual labour of petty trades in the towns. At Lattakia there are not fewer than three thousand of them, and at Antioch twice as many. Though not so violent, nor perhaps so courageous, as the Turkomans and Bedaween, the Ansairi can nevertheless defy the power of the Turkish authorities, and though usually

affecting a nominal obedience, they are easily roused by an act of injustice to unite in arms against the Sultan's troops. They practise polygamy, and are said to intermarry within the closest of all degrees of consanguinity. Their women are regarded as mere chattels, and bartered freely—two men exchanging daughters, or one giving a sister for a donkey; and as such the poor creatures seem to be used, carrying loads great distances, in line with other beasts of burden. They have no priests, and neither forms of prayer nor fixed times and places of worship. What they seem to revere the most is the tombs of eminent men. They resort to these at night in great numbers, but what ceremonies, if any, are there performed has not been ascertained. I fancy it would be dangerous to watch them. One of our party accidentally came to a cottage in which some people were assembled before a fire kindled at one end, but a man rushed out to order an instant withdrawal: whether the fire was being worshipped, or merely enjoyed on so cold a day, did not appear. I examined one of the tombs held sacred, and found it completely plastered over, and freshly whitewashed, that being a frequent attention paid to the illustrious dead. There was no door by which to enter the small mausoleum, but a hole in the wall, about six inches square, seemed to penetrate, and an oil lamp is kept always burning in it. The transmigration of souls apparently plays a prominent part in their creed, whatever it be. The silly rhapsody attributed by Assemani in his 'Bibliotheca Orientalis' to a nameless old man

of Cupha in Arabia, whom he calls the founder of their religion in the end of the ninth century, is evidently not deserving of consideration. The legend offers, however, some curious associations, if they cannot be regarded merely as coincidences. The old man was a saint after the manner of the East, consisting in very light attire, frequent fasting, and healing by a word or touch. Of those who followed him, he selected twelve to preach the doctrines he taught them. A sheikh arrested him, and ordered that he should be crucified next day. At night he kept the key of the old man's prison beneath his pillow. A girl of his family purloined the key when he was asleep, and released the prisoner. In the morning a miracle was proclaimed. The old man escaped to Syria, where he founded a sect said to be one of those inhabiting the Ansairi mountains, if not the whole Ansairi persuasion. It appears to me that the near proximity of this people to the sites of Arka, Arvad, Zimra, Sin, and Hamath, which were inhabited by the sons of Canaan when Abraham entered Syria, gives a sufficient colour to the theory of their descent from them, while the little that is known of their worship, and their pure Semitic language, both tend to corroborate it. We see, too, that in all conquered countries, where descendants of their original population continue to exist as a separate race, they are to be found concentrated in the nearest mountainous regions, to which they had retired to save something of their independent state; and the Ansairi range, accordingly, stands surrounded by the remains of those five Canaan-

itish cities known to have been inhabited by a people in many respects similar to the Ansairi of the present day.

The actual condition of this part of the country may be estimated by recent incidents, showing that little change has here taken place from the old times of rapine and bloodshed in Turkey. A village of worshippers of the sun refused to pay its taxes. A member of the provincial council of Tripoli was sent there to remonstrate a few days ago. Having failed in his mission, and not having ventured to proceed to extremities with so violent a people, he was returning home, when he passed through a Christian village. Village for village mattered little; he set fire to it. The panic-stricken inhabitants hurriedly conveyed their moveable property into their church, in the hope that it would be respected. The church was broken open and plundered by the followers of the functionary. Another village had been totally abandoned a few months ago on account of the unchecked depredations of a band of malefactors under a leader of infamous character named Issa. The villagers with their families took refuge at Antioch, where they remained in a state of the utmost destitution, while their crops were being publicly sold by Issa at the neighbouring small town of Jisr-Shogl. Efforts were made by the poor people to obtain protection from the Turkish authorities, but Issa found means of obtaining support amongst the members of the provincial council of Antioch. Last year the two Amamreh tribes, one of which bears the distinctive name of Beit-el-Shelf, the other Mohelbeh, together with the tribe of Beni-Ali,

determined to attack and subjugate at one blow the hostile tribe of Cardaha. The latter, having discovered the plan of attack, resolved on dividing into two bands; one to meet the assault, the other to destroy the villages of their assailants. The second detachment burnt six villages of the Beni-Ali, killed several persons, burnt two villages of the Mohelbeh, and carried off all the cattle they found, while the first detachment was driven in, and the villages of Wady-Beit-Hassar, situated on the high hills of the Cardaha, were destroyed. The people of Beit-Tashoot, a portion of the Semet-Cobli district, hastened to defend the villages of the Beni-Ali and Boodi against the Cardaha, but the Crahleh tribe, from another part of the Cardaha mountain, called Carem-Ibalieh, attacked Beit-Tashoot. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Ahmed-Aga-el-Mohammed-Adra, an enemy of the Crahleh, advanced from his castle of Merkab with a large party of his followers, attacked and burnt several of the Crahleh villages, and carried off a great many of their cattle. The tribes of Darins, the two Amamrehs, and Beni-Ali, united, and, negotiations for peace having been opened, hostilities ceased, and have not been renewed as yet, but they will be, as soon as a good opportunity offers. The Turkish authorities were fully cognisant of all that passed, but did not interfere further than by sending orders to preserve tranquillity. Mohammed-Aga-Haznadar, a chief of irregular cavalry, however, casually met several parties of armed men belonging to both sides, with whom he exchanged a few shots; three of his horsemen

were wounded, and he reported having killed four of the Ansairi. The inhabitants of Beit-el-Shelf, who are moon-worshippers, attacked lately El Harf, a part of the Bahluli district, burnt two villages, and carried off all their live stock. Three lives were lost on each side. The assailants were subsequently routed in their turn by the villagers of El Harf, who killed three more of their number. The Scoobin worship the sun, and are therefore immemorial foes of the Beit-el-Shelf. A mere squabble among some children led to a whole day's desultory fighting between the two tribes, during which five men of the Beit-el-Shelf and one of the Scoobin were killed, while another of the latter was taken prisoner and burnt to death, after having his hands and feet cut off. On this occasion twenty mounted irregulars were sent to the spot, but they did not interfere between the combatants, and returned home with the head of an Ansairi, in no way connected with the affair, whom they had met on the road, and decapitated unquestioned. This brutal act was justified by the statement that at the same place where the man was met by his executioners, a Turkish officer had been put to death by the Ansairi two years ago, and his body left to rot by the roadside. So deplorable a state of anarchy and conflict exists in a province, the chief town of which contains three hundred regular and three hundred and eighty irregular troops: of the former none have been ordered out of Lattakia, and of the latter none ever reached the scene of action, although they left the town for the purpose of restoring tran-

quillity. The very presence of irregulars in the town is an evil, for their frequent excesses prevent the industrious and peaceful portion of the Ansairi population in the immediate vicinity from bringing provisions and other commodities to market. When war rages on the distant hills, a poor gardener living at the gate of Lattakia may be dragged to prison for it by this police force, which declares he was taken fighting against the constituted authorities fifty miles off. The government not only does nothing to remedy this, but also adds to its bad results by a practice which, while it allows disorders to continue, impedes an honest livelihood, and deprives the town of supplies; for a single act of violence, sometimes even an accident, suffices to make it prohibit all communication between the town and the villages, the plain and the mountains, on the unreasonable idea of holding a whole tribe responsible for the misdeed or misfortune of an individual.

LETTER XI.

Jisr-Shogl — Jebel-el-Aála — Ruined Convents — Druzes — Metaweli—Weldi Settlement—Chalcis — Haji-Batran — Sheikh Jeduan—Agriculture—Trade.

Chalcis: March 19, 1859.

ON coming down from the Ansairi mountains, we entered the valley of the Orontes, and reached that river at the small town of Jisr-Shogl, whose fortified khan commands the only bridge in this district. The hereditary chief of the place, which contains about five thousand inhabitants, almost exclusively Mahometans, had on previous visits shown me some civility; but I had recently heard of so many misdoings on his part that I thought it right to let him understand how distasteful they were to Englishmen, and I declined his proffered hospitality on those grounds, which I explained to him. We therefore crossed the long bridge, and proceeded on our way. This local tyrant, whose name is Mehemed-Aga-Yansu, had been guilty of excesses, it would seem, which would hardly be believed at Constantinople; and he has succeeded in establishing such a reign of terror around him that no complaints are made. Extortion in the villages is the most venial of his vices. Innocent men have been arrested on false pretences, and kept chained in dungeons until a ransom

is paid; women carried off by force; plundering expeditions sent out without an attempt at secresy. Much noise would have been made about all this if a Christian had been wronged in a single instance. But Yansu is an intelligent as well as a wicked man, and carefully avoids molesting any but Mussulmans and Ansairi, who, he knows, have no friends to make political capital of their sufferings. After traversing the broad and fertile plain of the Orontes, here partially cultivated, we had to climb the rocky hills, called Jebel-el-Aála, which form a broad belt of naked ruggedness, once thickly peopled by monks and hermits. There is hardly any soil in this whole stony region, and how so vast a population of religious zealots was supported is a riddle to me. Anchorites would not want much, but, to judge by the spacious and highly ornate ruins of monasteries and convents, there must have been also other occupants not on bad terms with the world. One of the small plains surrounded by rocks was that of Immae, where Zenobia took her stand against Aurelian, and was defeated: it is now called Halka, or the Ring. There are many Greek inscriptions on these ruins, which are so numerous that one can count five-and-twenty villages or large cloisters in sight at once; the dates range from the third century to the time of the Saracen conquest, when they abruptly terminate, and the purport, being mostly sepulchral records, throws no light on the history of the buildings. The few villages still inhabited are occupied chiefly by Druzes, who are in close communication with those of Mount Lebanon.

A secret post and police establishment of foot-messengers to convey verbal intelligence is kept up between the different branches of this sect with singular efficiency. The most minute circumstances of their frequent struggles with the Maronites are thus made known to all their brethren, without exaggeration as without attenuation. On Mount Lebanon, the open protection given by the French to the Maronites having encouraged a fanciful sympathy with England amongst the Druzes there, it is here also evinced with an unerring echo. As Englishmen, we were accordingly received very cordially by them.

The religion of the Druzes was for a time a mystery, and no enquiring traveller could make out what it was, but their books have now been read and commented on, proving that there was not any great secret to discover. It is merely a Mussulman heresy of the end of the tenth century, whose crazy founder, El Hakim, claimed the honours of divinity. Like the Coran, the sacred books of the Druzes contain plagiarisms from the Gospels and Pentateuch, beyond which little remains but a mystic jargon, whose obscurity seems to be its chief attraction to the initiated. They quote, in support of their tenet of the transmigration of souls, our Saviour's statement that John the Baptist was Elijah. Consciousness of a previous existence they assert to be frequent. They tell a story of a child of Jebel-el-Aála, who complained to his parents of the hardship of being born a peasant, after having lived as a rich man on Mount Lebanon, and begged them to take him to his former

home. They did so, and he mentioned the names of the places they passed. He guided them straight to a house, where he called a woman and told her he was her dead husband, asked after their children, and requested that the neighbours should be assembled to greet his return. In their presence he enquired if some money that he had concealed had ever been found. On a reply in the negative, he went to the place, and produced his hoard. A compromise then took place; and his new parents accepted a share of the treasure on the condition of taking him back to Jebel-el-Aála, and keeping him there. The Druzes have secret signs of recognition, like the Freemasons, and they ask strangers questions without apparent meaning, to which the conventional answers must be given before they are received as brother Druzes. They are temperate in their habits, and in some respects moral. Dignified in their deportment under all circumstances, they bear affliction with the greatest fortitude. The particulars of the death of Jumblat, by order of Abdulla Pasha of Acre, which have been minutely recorded, equal in grandeur the last moments of Socrates. What that lofty principle is which raises the Druzes above all sublunary sorrows has not been defined, but certain it is that, whatever it may be, its effects are hardly surpassed by the holy resignation and sublime faith of Christian martyrs. Self-mortification is a favourite exercise with them, many having passed their whole lives in a state of voluntary penance, altogether eclipsing the asceticism of Romish and Greek monks. Charity

is an essential part of their piety; not merely alms-giving, but the largest development of brotherly love: confined, however, to those of their own sect. Their worst trait of character is a profound dissimulation towards other communities, apparently inbred in their race. Religion absolves them from every fraud on those in the position of infidels towards them. Thursday is their weekly day of prayer. The whole evening is then passed in chanting portions of their sacred books. Their supplications, which go on during the night, are chiefly for purity of heart and tongue, pardon before death, a sufficiency of worldly provision, and a final translation to a holy tabernacle. They add that they do not pray for a reversal of divine decrees, but that grace may accompany them when awarded as chastisements. Their praises are eloquent as Oriental languages and diction alone can make them; God is addressed as the High, the Great, whose grace is invisible, whose power is illimitable, the most generous of hearers, whose commands none can gainsay, whose designs none can frustrate. After chanting, prayer, and praise, at their religious meetings, they discuss until a late hour the politics of the day, which they regard as an important branch of religion; and only the initiated of the highest grade are allowed to remain during these debates. All information received by each of their number is then stated; the character of persons in authority, whose position may exercise an influence on the welfare and destiny of their race, is scrutinised; and arrangements are made for communi-

cating the results of their deliberation to the most distant branches of the sect. Thus, when they are engaged in war with the Maronites, or when attacked by the Turks, there is a degree of unity in their action which is quite surprising. One spirit pervades the whole body of the Druzes, scattered, though it be, over districts, often hundreds of miles apart, which fact may in some measure account for the frequent successes of this sagacious people under the assault of superior numbers. They have a supreme contempt for all other creeds, with the sole exception of the Metaweli, who are in close contact with them. We slept in two villages of the Jebel-el-Aála belonging to this sect, which is a branch of the Sheite heresy of Islam. The differences in practical matters between these and the orthodox Sunnites are very trifling. They keep, for instance, a small cake of earth from the spot where the martyr of the sect of Ali, El Hosain, was killed, and touch it with their foreheads when prostrate in prayer. They divest themselves, during prayer, of every ornament or garment worked with gold or silver, even their watches, when they have them, with the idea that they are not consistent with humility. The Metaweli, like the Sheites of Persia, contract marriage for predetermined periods, at the expiration of which they are renewed if desired. They are computed at fifty thousand in Syria; a small number, fortunately for the Sultan, as there is no more disaffected people in his dominions than the Metaweli, who show all the hostility of sectarianism against the Sunnite Turks.

I have now come here to visit the Arab sheikh whom I advised to settle, as formerly mentioned. Mehemed-al-Ganim, with his tribe of Weldi, have adopted that suggestion, and the government has allotted to them this site for cultivation. His people go freely to Aleppo to make their necessary purchases; and their example is followed by many of the other Bedaween, who now appear for the first time in the bazaars. It is said that an unusual degree of activity in the sale of British manufactured goods has arisen in consequence of the novel feeling of security on the part of the Arabs. The Bedaween population, occupying a vast territory, on the western boundary of which lie the towns of Urfa, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus, and numbering at the lowest computation, with the inhabitants of Arabia Proper, four millions, possesses a great amount of wealth yielded by their herds of camels and flocks of sheep. The cotton stuffs and colonial produce, which they require in large quantities, have hitherto reached them after passing through many hands, with a proportionate increase of price, while the importers received only a small part of the profit. The Bedaween being now encouraged to go to the towns, and deal directly with the merchants—the latter being also enabled to forward their wares to the desert for sale, without incurring the risks previously apprehended, through the protection given by the sheikhs to persons recommended by them —both the purchasers and the sellers are considerably benefited. On the other hand, the locating of the nomads is not without its dangers and inconveniences.

A too numerous concourse of tribes on plains heretofore unpeopled may give rise to disputes for pasturage, or wells, or defensible positions. Judicious and active measures will become necessary, and one can only hope that the Turkish authorities will not be found wanting. What they have done in the matter thus far is good. They will surely not be blind to their obvious interest, for it would form no unimportant element for the consolidation of Turkish power, were the wandering and predatory habits of the Arab tribes thus modified, and so wide an expanse of country, almost all of which is arable, inhabited by a peaceful and productive population. I find about three hundred tents here, and a good deal of land sown. Mares and lances have been sold; oxen and ploughs purchased. I cannot say the furrows look very straight, but the soil is extremely fertile, and a fair harvest may reward their labour, unskilled though it be. Haji-Batran is here with a strong detachment of his Hanadi horsemen, to protect the crops from the Anezi. The ground is well chosen for the experiment; a boundless plain of black loam extending eastwards, with a lower valley of rich alluvial earth on the banks of a small stream. On the north and south there are ranges of low hills to cover the plain from incursions of the nomads, who are not fond of ground where they can be seen from a distance. This place thus becomes a sort of entrance of the desert, and the settlement of a tribe here will be a defence to the villages on the west. That it was formerly a commanding position, is proved by the remains of the ancient

fortified city of Chalcis, which still stand on the western slope of the valley. Its whole line of ramparts, and the gates, can be traced in grass-grown mounds with large cut stones fallen down their outer sides, where there seems to have been a broad moat. In the centre of the enclosure there are larger mounds, which might be interesting to excavate, as Chalcis was a wealthy city, if one may judge by the ransom it paid to Chosroes, king of Persia, when he successfully besieged it in the middle of the fifth century.

As I sat one afternoon in Mehemed-al-Ganim's tent, discussing with him the all-important subject of the crops, Haji Batran came in with a strange tale of an Anezi force in the neighbourhood. The Weldi Sheikh started up, and ran to the summit of a tumulus which served him as a watch-tower. I said to Batran that, of course, the Weldi would not suffer by any attack of the Anezi while he was here with his Hanadi for their protection. He replied that the Anezi would not hurt them, but that it would not be so easy to prevent their turning their mares in to graze where they find cornfields. I began to think I understood, and I enquired what sheikh or aghid was leading the Anezi; Batran could not know; it might be Jedaan himself. I left the tent, and sent one of my own Arabs to look for the Anezi, and to ask their leader, whoever he might be, to come and speak with me. Mehemed-al-Ganim then came down from the mound, plucking his beard with vexation, his great eyes rolling wildly, and uttering lamentations with all the picturesque vehemence of his

race. Hundreds of Anezi were guarding their mares while feeding on his crops. I remarked to Batran that it was surely time for him to do his duty. He acquiesced, but with no very remarkable alacrity, and, mounting, proceeded with several hundred Hanadi in the direction pointed out by Mehemed-al-Ganim as being the scene of his disaster. The latter then opened his full heart; he even wept over the loss of his first agricultural produce. He could not be mistaken; Haji Batran must be at the bottom of it all; he never would let the tribes settle; he would lose his bread if they settled; the services of the Hanadi were well paid by the government; if the work were better done by settled Bedaween, the Hanadi would no longer be required; they would have to settle too; they are too lazy to work; and Batran would no longer be the governor of the desert; it was no use; the Weldi must get back their mares and their lances; they must rove and plunder as before. Such was the burden of the poor Sheikh's excited wailing, which continued till long after dark. Next morning my Arab messenger returned. He had passed the night with the Anezi. Batran had never gone near them. Jedaan, who was there, would be here immediately. He soon appeared. We talked awhile on his own affairs, skirmishes with the Shammar and the like, and then I asked him what had brought him to the Weldi settlement. He answered quickly that Batran had sent to tell him he would find here plenty of green forage; that the mares of his tribe were starving; and that he had brought some of them to get

fat on the barley of these fools who had settled. I alluded to the government, but he cut me short by saying that Batran is the government, and that I, who was always urging him to obey the government, ought not to find fault with his having done so on this occasion. I remarked that he would probably find out his mistake when he applied for the annual permission to trade, which the government could not consistently grant, after having proved their wish that the Weldi should settle by condoning the tithes of their produce for two years. The Anezi Sheikh opened his eyes wide with astonishment, whistled a long low note, and said that he was himself the fool. He then jumped up, hoped I might be eternal, and sprang on his mare. In another half-hour all the Anezi were on their way back to the Euphrates, with their long swinging gallop and occasional halt to breathe their mares, which takes them over the ground with so much rapidity and so little fatigue. Haji Batran did not return to the camp. Mehemed-al-Ganim appeared all smiles and thanks; Jedaan had sworn to him to compensate for all damage done, and to spare and protect the Weldi for the future, and Jedaan's word is better than any bond.

The prospects of the settled Arabs seem encouraging. The price of grain is high, and, if in this first year there is a fair profit, the example may be followed by other tribes. What chiefly depresses agricultural produce in the market is the want of means of conveyance at a remunerative rate. The country grows more than it consumes, but the surplus reaches foreign

ports only when there are famine prices. The extent of cultivation would be increased if there were a demand for produce, and improvements would also be introduced in its practice. Implements have not been altered since the days of Abraham, and are of the worst description. The advantage of a rotation of crops being unknown, land lies fallow after one crop. No manure is used; marshes remain undrained; irrigable fields unwatered, excepting near the towns. Mechanical power and appliances, especially adapted to a thinly peopled country, have not been resorted to. For these reasons the exportation of grain from Syria, which might become extensive and lucrative, is merely a casual and doubtful resource for the corn-merchant, when there is a failure of crops in other countries. If properly protected, the settlement of some of the Arab tribes might soon convert these desert plains into fruitful cornfields and vineyards. If, instead of kindling dissensions amongst the Bedaween, the government were to inspire confidence, a located population might be formed; at first in detached positions, to serve as nuclei, whose growing strength would powerfully impress the surrounding nomads, and bring them, from coveting the wealth and welfare of villagers, to adopting the same means of acquiring them. Then there are so many other species of culture suitable to the soil and climate, which might become a source of prosperity to the settlers and the country. Cotton, for instance, is indigenous here. There is no lack of land, light, friable, and dry, such as is, in a high

degree, calculated to produce it in abundance. The summer is hot, it is true, but strong westerly breezes prevail, which render it generally more temperate in autumn, when the cotton plant is in flower. Little of the land sown with cotton is irrigable, but the young plants are watered once or twice by hand when a long drought tends to stop their growth. The yield is excellent. Land is measured by what is called in Arabic a feddan, the area which a pair of oxen can plough in a day, that is, about a third of an acre; this requires 15 lbs. of seed, and yields on an average 12 cwt. in the husk, or 266 lbs. of cleaned cotton wool. Its cultivation could be greatly extended, were the proper steps taken. Twenty years ago, three times as much cotton was grown in Syria, but the importation of English twist has enabled the local manufacturers to work more profitably with it, and they do not use the native produce so much as formerly. It has consequently decreased nearly to the level of the supply required for making wicks and stuffing furniture. Its increase, like that of every other branch of agriculture in this country, has hitherto been checked by the insecurity of property. The periodical inroads and plundering expeditions of the nomadic tribes lay the whole rural population under a burden, which alone suffices to frustrate their endeavours to attain prosperity. Without this one paramount drawback, cultivation of many kinds might enrich these wretched peasants, and cover the broad expanse of the Syrian plains, which now only show a

few scattered patches of tillage amidst wildernesses of fertile land. This location of tribes seems to be the only possible remedy for the evil. Traditions exist amongst them of a former state of intellectual culture and national power, and a vague presentiment is occasionally expressed by them that a change will at some future time restore it. The physical and mental faculties of these descendants from one of the most noble stocks of the human race, are not inferior to those of their Palmyrenian and Babylonian ancestors. The history of the intercourse of nations, which Montesquieu identifies with the history of the development of agriculture and trade, shows that their decline, while accounting for the present obscurity and isolation of this once great people, is not irremediable. With the rise of cultivation and commerce, that fallen greatness might be revived. The vicissitudes of Asiatic nations have always been more decisive than those of European countries. The growth of a state in the East is rapid as its decay. Syria fell before the advance of the Turks. Unlike the warlike races which people the West, the effeminate inhabitants of Asia, when vanquished, become subject in fact and in spirit. No love of liberty, no pride of independence, takes up arms after defeat. In this case, moreover, success in war on the part of the Turks was not followed by the advantages which the conquerors of the Gauls and Britons conferred on those subjected to the Roman yoke. New arts were not introduced, agriculture not encouraged, commerce not maintained.

Here, ruined cities, countries laid waste, still record the havoc of wars long past. The invasion of the Turks was devastation for its own sake, the wild beast's thirst of blood, the barbarian's lust of mere dominion. We now see in the state of this country the necessary effects of such causes. But the clouds, which have threatened the Turkish domination since the commencement of the present century, have not blown over. If they do not burst in a storm, as has been so often predicted, though such is not my opinion, they cannot be dissipated without leaving a changed atmosphere. Then will arise a question of difficult solution, amongst many others equally or more so, in the disposal of several millions of nomadic Arabs, Koords, and Turkomans. The plains of Western Asia, from the Euxine and the Caucasus to the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf, are peopled by these races, each of them capable of aspiring at national independence, and none of them advanced enough to form a state; while on their northern frontier stands a compact body of over sixty millions, feeling the concentrating and invigorating influences in favour of conquest wielded by an absolute despotism, with a formidable military system to bring these lawless nations beneath its yoke. They must either be subjugated by that Russian sword, or saved by the pacific weapons of agriculture, industry, and trade, which can alone give them strength to withstand its inevitable thrust. Without pursuing further a discursive range over the bright domains of a possible future, the car-

dinal fact of the matter seems to be that, if Western Asia is not to be left to the unresisted encroachments of Russia, the best chance for its escape lies in the extension of those arts, and the development of those resources, which no other foreign power can so well foster as Great Britain, and which will also bring wealth to our own shores.

LETTER XII.

Shooting Expedition — Galloping in the Desert — Castle of Shuemis — Sclamieh — Mowali Arabs — Ahmed Bey — Palmyra — Sebaa Anezi — Fares ibn Hedeb — Robbery of a Caravan — Attack by Troops — Hadidéen Arabs — Battle with Mowali — River Chalus — Berœa.

Berœa : August 29, 1859.

A SHOOTING party was organised a week ago to try the hills of Hass, where red-legged partridges were said to be abundant. Though no sportsman, I joined it for the sake of exercise. Fifteen miles to the south of Aleppo we came to the large village of Sfiri, which was made the head-quarters of the expedition. Guns and dogs and game-bags were got ready; a donkey laden with provisions, followed by another carrying two large skins full of water, opened the march; a motley crowd in shooting-jackets and gaiters of many cuts and hues filed off in animated discussion on the merits of breech-loaders and patent cartridges, and narrating marvellous exploits to prove their theories. All this was not in my line, and I soon got tired of it. Strolling back to the village, I met an Arab of the Mowali tribe, and asked him where their camp was. At Irjil; that was nothing, just four hours' ride from Sfiri. I engaged him to guide me to his sheikh, with whom I had sworn the oath of brotherhood two years

ago. Two villagers volunteered to accompany me, and I took one of my own Arabs: we were thus a party of five. We cantered along gaily for some time, then pulled up, and cantered on again, according to Bedaween rule, until the close of evening, when we found ourselves at Irjil, the site of the ancient city of Regillum, but now a series of foundations of buildings without a stone above the surface, and a large well at the foot of a conical hill on which the citadel had stood. Lines of cut stones and green mounds were plentiful, but no tents were to be seen. The tribe we sought had left. An examination of the cinders where their fires had been, and of the footprints of their camels, showed that they had not been gone long, and that they had moved in a southerly direction. To return as one came is always disagreeable. The Mowali guide said his people must be at Hara Iji Sheham, a camping-place at about the same distance from where we then were as we were from Sfiri, but in the opposite quarter of the compass. There was no moon; we could steer by the stars. A short council of war was held, and we decided on going to the camp rather than the village, hoping to finish the night, if we could not commence it, in bed. It was a weary ride, over a naked plain, without road or path. Shortly after midnight, the Mowali halted, saying we had reached Hara Iji Sheham. Here also were cinders and camels' footprints, but no tents. My four companions began talking all together, each giving an opinion which no other listened to. I took off my mare's bridle to let her crop the short grass in

default of her accustomed feed of barley, and, tying the halter-rope to my wrist, lay down beside her, and was soon fast asleep.

The sun shining on my eyes awoke me, much refreshed, but very hungry. The plain around offered not a single object to relieve its inhospitable aspect; all was flat, stale, and unprofitable. One was not in the best of humours for consultation, either; one felt forcibly what a benevolent institution one's breakfast is. There was nothing for it, however, but to make the best of a bad bargain, and the best was a moderate draught of muddy water in the palm of one's hand. No well or spring was there, but the grass, still green on one spot when all around was burnt up by the summer sun, proved that water was near the surface, and holes had been dug by the tribes that were in the habit of encamping at Hara Iji Sheham to procure a limited and unwholesome supply for their use and that of their flocks and herds. Round one of these holes we all sat down, each holding his horse's bridle, and looking at the other. Nothing seemed to occur to any of us. Matters looked too serious for much conversation. One fact, however, was suggested by the Mowali for consideration, and was fully appreciated: we should have to ride the whole day to return to the village, whereas a tribe might be within a short distance of us. The unanimous resolve, and of course the least rational, was to go from camping-place to camping-place until we should find a tribe. That day passed without food, but not altogether without water. We stopped at

three different wells, where traces of recent camps remained, and we saw two large wild boars near one of them. But we were travelling fast to the south-east—that is, away from the border of the desert, where villages can alone be expected—and we were beginning to wonder how we should get back. At nightfall we saw three Bedaween boys, from six to ten years old, tending a flock of sheep. They told us the Mowali, to which tribe they belonged, were only a few hours' ride to the south of us. They gave us some milk with a few crusts of coarse hard bread, and we lay down by them to sleep, our mares grazing peacefully with the sheep. Nothing but the best Arab blood could have stood such work, and fortunately we had the best. I was surprised at dawn to find that I had slept very well, and did not suffer so much from hunger as on the previous morning. Our anxiety was, moreover, relieved by the prospect of soon coming up with the Mowali, for we had, until we met these boys, penetrated into the heart of the desert without any information of the position of the tribes, and two risks were thereby incurred—first, that we should neither fall in with one to receive us kindly, nor have the means of returning; secondly, that we should cross the path of some marauding expedition, neither belonging to the tribe of our guide, nor to any other with whose sheikh I had the bond of fraternity. In the latter case we should simply have been robbed of our animals, stripped almost entirely of our clothes, and left to wander about on foot and helpless till starvation should definitively

settle the question of our 'to be or not to be.' Last year a caravan of three thousand camels with six hundred men perished near where we were. It was bound from Damascus to Bagdad, and lost the way. No Bedaween happened to be within reach, and a tribe came upon their remains long after their death. They would have given assistance had they been in time, but to restore the goods to the merchants would have been too much to expect, and that tribe has become rich by the spoil.

The little boys gave us some more of their ewes' milk, but they had no more crusts to give. We then mounted, and followed the direction pointed out by them. They would follow leisurely with the sheep to replenish their provisions. The good-natured fellows said they could not want for much, so long as they could share the food provided for their lambs, which seemed to be plentifully supplied by a couple of hundred ewes. We rode the whole of that day, cantering as much as we could with due regard to the strength of the mares, on whose lasting quality our lives depended: luckily for us, that quality was of the highest order. In the afternoon we passed the ruins of a fine old castle on the summit of a conical hill, called by the Bedaweens, Shuemis. Its architecture was neither Saracenic nor of the time of the Crusaders, and it must have owed its origin to the period of the commercial greatness of Palmyra, as it stands midway between Hama and the glorious remains of Zenobia's City of Palms. Not far from the castle was the site of the ancient Irenopolis,

now Selamieh, boasting of a few cottages built so as to form a sort of fort within the area of the previous town. We had then the hope of soon reaching the Mowali camp, and did not care to turn westwards out of our course to seek rest and refreshment. We still kept advancing as fast as we could, sometimes at a good gallop when we thought we were near our journey's end. An hour after dark we saw a fire ahead of us, and pressed on to the camp as we thought; it was only a caravan of camels laden with soda on its way from Sokhua to Hama. From the drivers we learnt that the Mowali had moved that day from the spot indicated by the shepherd-boys to one several hours' ride to the south-east. We had passed their abandoned camping-ground during the day without recognising it, and we still held on our course, husbanding the strength of our mares. About midnight we came to another fire, from which some Arabs came out to beat us off, supposing we were a plundering party. After a few words of explanation they told us they were an outpost of the Mowali camp, which was only a couple of hours' ride to the east, and gave us some bread. Following their directions, we rode on till the dawn was beginning to break, when a horseman galloped towards us, challenging quite in military style; on our replying that we were friends, he approached, and I distinguished the features of a cousin of Ahmed Bey, sheikh of the Mowali. This man's history was curious. He had been taken prisoner ten years ago by the government irregulars, and brought to Hama, where he was

forcibly enlisted as a private soldier in a regular cavalry regiment, then marching to Kars. After several years' service, his intelligence and efficiency earned promotion, and finally he attained the rank of lieutenant. His regiment having returned to Syria, the temptation was irresistible; he deserted, and rejoined his Bedaween brethren. When our arrival was announced by the quondam officer of dragoons, Ahmed Bey came forth with the warmest welcome. We were not sorry to find ourselves at last comfortably installed in his hospitable tent.

The Mowali are a Syrian tribe of Bedaween, generally to be found within a triangle formed by Aleppo, Palmyra, and Damascus. Their country was once much more extensive, but they have been driven westwards during a long series of years of vain resistance to the advance of the Anezi. Even now they only succeed in holding their ground by means of alliances with the Hadideen, Lehep, Ferdoon, and various other tribes. Their proximity to the Anezi brings them into frequent collisions with the great desert tribe, but their number is too limited, only two thousand tents, to permit their unquestionable bravery to be of much avail. They bear a worse character than the Anezi, and have fewer of the virtues supposed to belong to the Bedaween. Their bad name in the desert originated in their having treacherously murdered, about fifty years ago, some of the Anezi sheikhs when assembled in a Mowali tent to conclude a peace; and it has become a proverb amongst the other tribes that the tent of the

Mowali is the tent of shame. A tradition assigns their rise to the journey of a youth, the last descendant of the Ommiad Khalifs, to Constantinople, where Sultan Amurath took compassion on his reduced state, and purchased all the slaves that could be found in the desert to make a tribe of which he was appointed sheikh. The sheikh being Mowla, or prince, his tribe took the name of the Arabic plural of that word, Mowali, and his successors, alone amongst all the sheikhs of the desert, have consequently borne the title of Bey. The present chief, Ahmed Bey, is thus the representative of the most ancient aristocracy amongst the Arabs, that of the Khalifs. He is renowned for his bravery, and, notwithstanding what is thought of his tribe, he is himself much respected. In comparison with other sheikhs, he is certainly an enlightened young man, and disposed to keep his people from committing excesses. In appearance he is very tall and athletic, with a dark commanding countenance.

A day of rest was no small satisfaction to us after such a gallop, and our trusty mares seemed to be quite of the same opinion. They looked just a little drawn in about the flanks, but there was no diminution of muscle, nor of appetite. We did nothing that day, but strolled about the camp, which I found was pitched on the outer plain of Palmyra. The ancient site itself is screened from the west by a wall of low hills as a garden, whose every tree is a Corinthian pillar, and noble temples for its arbours, but all dried up and lying dead with its wreaths of marble colonnades and

porticoes glittering in the evening sun like Byron's gilded halo hovering round decay.

It had been agreed with Ahmed Bey that the camp should be moved westwards next morning. I therefore got up before sunrise, and found the Sheikh's tent already struck. This is the signal, and no other warning is ever given of a march. The tribe was all soon busily engaged. The chief labour seemed to fall on the women. Taking away the poles, and rolling up the long tent-coverings, was concluded in a very few minutes. Camels were laden with pots and bags of grain. On the top of the load, a parapet was formed of rolled carpets, and children were hurriedly thrown into the hollow space. Girls mounted in front to guide the stately animals; women climbed up by the camels' hind legs when they were in motion; others walked humbly after them. The Bedaween make a point of always moving their camps in the shortest possible time in order to keep their women in practice for all emergencies. The horsemen, lance in hand, proceeded to the front and flanks of the line, some on their mares, others on dromedaries with their mares led behind them. The order of march was abreast, the laden camels in the centre. As the sun rose over the level horizon, it was a singular sight, this tribe in motion, covering at least a mile of ground, with the long uncouth shadows of the camels stretching out on the naked yellow desert before us. We rode for about four hours in a perfectly unvarying direction, and at last we came to some undulating grassy land. Ahmed

Bey got from his dromedary to his mare, and, galloping on, disappeared amongst the low mounds. In a quarter of an hour he returned slowly without his lance, which he had stuck into the earth where he meant the camp to be pitched. Suddenly all the horsemen left us, and we soon came to the spot, now a forest of spears. The men, dismounted, were sitting on the ground in circles at a short distance, while their mares grazed at will around them. Each woman, recognising her husband's lance, pitched his tent where he had planted it. Young girls, carrying skins to fill with water, ran to a small stream. Children spread in all directions, gathering wild thyme and other woody herbs to burn. In an incredibly brief space we were established as if we had been stationary there for months.

Near us was a large camp of the Sebàa Anezi, with whom the Mowali are at present in alliance. This is the wealthiest and most numerous of the Anezi tribes; not so warlike as the Fedan, but fearing no enemy, as they can muster ten or twelve thousand horsemen with ease at any time. They have enormous herds of camels and flocks of sheep, and their mares are of the purest blood to be found in the desert. They trade largely; and rarely suffer much hardship, being possessed of money, which can hardly be said of any other tribe. Their name is taken from the Arabic word Seba, or seven, that being the number of their subdivisions, which remain, however, almost always together. The names of these sections are Duam, Abideh, Ishfoaieh, Mooeneh, Gmassa, Mooajeh, and

Beaieh, with the two smaller bodies of adherents called Pteinat and Roosali. I do not think anyone else has had the opportunity of drawing up a correct list of the Bedaween tribes and subdivisions, and, as I have given myself some trouble to ascertain them with accuracy, I now record the result. The Fedan Anezi are subdivided into nine tribes, which are Mehed the people of Jedaan, Fooeris, Ajajara, Roos, Shmeilat, Greibat, Roaba, Hrisa the followers of Deham, and Omeir. The other Anezi tribes are Jelas, of which the numerous family of its sheikh, Faissal Ibn Shalan, form a distinct tribe called Roala; Seloot, Erfuddi, Shumlan, Hayaza, and Ibn Haddal, which generally roam in the neighbourhood of Hilla, the ancient Babylon, and Bagdad; Fooenis, Amarat, Majin, Serdyeh, Tiar, and Hesenneh, rarely leaving the southern regions of the Syrian desert, and the Nejd or Central Arabia; Weled Ali, encamping almost always to the east of Damascus; and Beni Sachar, and Salhaan, to the east of Jerusalem, and occasionally on the plains of the Jordan and Esdraelon. The Shammar, who confine their wanderings to Mesopotamia, are subdivided into the tribes of Abdeh, Amud, Assareh, and Jerban. The Mowali, Weldi, Lehep, Ferdoon, and Hadideen, on the western skirts of the desert, and the Obeidch and Montefik, on the eastern, low tribes, more or less numerous, and the Sokhni, Aghel, and Aghedat, also not of high repute, are all dependent on the greater tribes for protection. The sheikh of the Sebaa is Fares Ibn Hedeb, a fine old man of eighty, much

respected for his justice and kind nature. I went over to see him when our camp had assumed the routine of desert life. He received me unwillingly, and it was evident there was something unfavourable on his mind. After a short interchange of ceremonious enquiries about each other's health, I rose to leave, saying I had learnt for the first time that he was capricious, as we met on different terms now from those of our previous intercourse, without any cause that I was aware of. He begged me to sit down, and then asked if all Franks were of the same tribe. I replied that certainly it was not so. He hoped I did not belong to the same tribe as a person whom he named. Nothing could be further from the fact; we did not even speak the same language. This seemed to please the old man, who at once opened his heart. Some men of his tribe had made a bargain with the person in question for the safe conveyance of some travellers to Palmyra; the Bedaween conveyed them safely thither and back, but the money was not paid. When I told Fares that I knew the travellers he alluded to, and that they also were natives of a country far distant from my own, where no gentleman ever behaved so, he said simply that he was very glad to hear it, because he had come to the conclusion that all Franks were contemptible rascals. Future travellers may suffer for this, I fear. The Sheikh then mentioned several occasions on which his tribe had escorted travellers, and asked me if I knew what country they belonged to. I diverted this scrutiny by putting the question whether any of them had ever been guilty of such

conduct. He answered, with a sonorous but not irreverent oath, that none had, and admitted the force of my argument, that one black sheep does not prevent the remainder of the flock from being white. We then talked very cordially, and he showed me his mares and one horse, which he boasted that no money could buy, and such as probably never left the desert.

When I returned late to the Mowali camp, I found it in a state of uproar. Fifteen laden camels had just been brought in from a caravan plundered between Hama and Homs by a party of Mowali. Ahmed Bey is a great fighter and plunderer in the wars of the tribes, but he has no taste for the road. As I entered his tent, he was beating the robbers unmercifully with a big stick. He desisted on seeing me, and I remarked that it was all very well to inflict punishment, but that restitution seemed to me not less urgent. To this he at once assented, and, ordering some of his own family to mount immediately, he sent the laden camels back untouched. One of the relatives of Fares had accompanied me home, and I suggested that, if he went with them, the authorities would have an additional guarantee for the safe delivery of the goods. This was also done most faithfully, as I afterwards learnt from the Hadideen who were with the caravan that had been robbed.

After another day's march in a north-westerly direction with the Mowali, we encamped on a fine plain, well supplied with water, where the Sheikh announced his intention of remaining a week at least. In the middle of the first night, however, I was roughly aroused,

and told to mount, for the regular troops were on us. A quarter of an hour had not elapsed before all the tents were struck and loaded on the camels, ready to follow the flocks and herds which were being driven rapidly eastwards. Ahmed Bey asked me if I was going with him, and, on my replying in the negative, he took a hurried leave, gave the word to march, and galloped out of sight. I was thus left with my own Arab and the two villagers of Sfiri, each holding his mare, and wondering what would happen next. To go towards Hama or Homs might prove unsatisfactory, inasmuch as we should meet the troops, and either have to betray the Arabs by telling which way they had gone, or appear to take their part against the government by refusing to give that information. The great bear pointed to the best course we had to follow, and I led on, steering directly for the polestar. When the day broke, the troops became visible far behind us, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, marching steadily towards the east, but without the most remote chance of overtaking the Mowali. We rode all day, and rested at night on a tumulus where we found good water and grass, but we had no food for ourselves, as, in the hurry of leaving, Ahmed Bey had not thought of offering us any, or we of asking him for it. The mares were fresh, and we went on gaily next morning, still keeping their heads to the north. I do not attempt to describe the country, for two reasons—first, because I thought only of writing about the state of its population when I began these letters, so many books full of descriptions

having already been published; and secondly, because the sameness of the scenery in the desert leaves me without an object to describe. Suffice it to say that we advanced as fast as we could, tightening our respective waist-belts from time to time for obvious reasons. We arrived in the evening at a spring called Arooneh, where we hailed with delight the appearance of a few Hadideen tents. After a two days' fast with violent exercise, the mess of half-baked balls of unleavened bread swimming in melted butter, which was placed before us in a wooden platter one foot deep and three in diameter, seemed to have reached the perfection of culinary art.

The Hadideen are a quiet kindly tribe of shepherds, who never enjoyed any reputation for martial qualities until quite lately. They are not well mounted, and, to enable them to defend themselves, they had been for some time gradually and secretly procuring fire-arms. A quarrel between the Mowali and Hadideen for pasturage occurred last year, just when the troops were sent from Hama against the Ansairi of Ismael Khair Bey. The first attack of the Mowali was met, to their utter surprise, by a volley from upwards of a thousand muskets. Ahmed Bey, talking of it to me, said he could not make out what the Hadideen meant when he saw them sally forth from their camp on foot with big sticks in their hands; but, when fire issued from the sticks, and bullets whizzed about his ears unhorsing several of his men, he exclaimed that they had turned Turks with guns, and he led off his lancers at their best

pace. The Mowali had not retreated many hours when they met about a thousand Metaweli horsemen armed with carbines, who said they had come to assist them. No great friendship had ever existed between the two tribes, and Ahmed Bey, not understanding the motive of the offer, declined their aid. His cousin, Mehemed el Harfan, had personal grievances, however, against the Hadideen, and, taking three hundred and fifty volunteers from the Mowali, he joined the Metaweli, who consented to attack the Hadideen with him. Mehemed el Harfan had carried off and married a young girl of the Hadideen. She had escaped to her tribe after having lived a couple of years with him; and, when he claimed her from her family, as the mother of his son, they had rejected his demand. His honour, as well as his affection, was at stake. He thirsted for revenge on his enemy, while he sighed for love of his wife. A battle took place near Arooneh. The Hadideen were defeated. Mehemed el Harfan called on the Metaweli to accompany him in the pursuit, that he might recover his wife. At that moment a messenger arrived in hot haste to give the Metaweli some tidings, on hearing which they turned back, and left the Mowali alone. The Hadideen rallied on seeing this, and assailed the Mowali, who succumbed to their superior numbers and weapons. Two hundred of them were killed and wounded. Mehemed el Harfan received several balls. He succeeded in reaching the spring of Arooneh, where we enjoyed the hospitality of the Hadideen; lay down, and tried to drink, but was stabbed to death by those

pursuing him. They cut his body into small pieces, and sent them round the camp to prove that the honour of the family, whose daughter had been taken, was avenged. The strange conduct of the Metaweli in this affair was afterwards explained by themselves. They were in alliance with the Ansairi. On hearing of the advance of Tahir Pasha from Beyrout, Ismael Khair Bey sent to beg the Metaweli to create a diversion in his favour in the vicinity of Hama, which might prevent the garrison there from attacking him on the other side. They did so, and caused such a fight that the small Turkish force could not show itself. But, when they received intelligence that Khair Bey and his two brothers had been killed, they had no further motive for fighting, and returned home.

While we were still on the field of battle, and the scene of Mehemed el Harfan's death, some of the Hadideen tribe, who had been at Hama, reached the tents. They told us they had been with the caravan robbed by the Mowali, and that the fifteen loaded camels sent back by Ahmed Bey had been handed over near the town to a party of government irregulars, who had boasted of having recaptured them by force. They also said that the regulars had marched home when they found that the Mowali were gone; and that reports had been spread—not by themselves, it is to be hoped—of a battle having been fought, in which the Mowali had been totally routed with great loss.

Towards the evening we continued our journey, but no longer impelled by any urgent motive for haste after

partaking of Hadideen hospitality. With the polestar before us, we rode through the night, which was not very dark, and much safer. I had nothing to fear from Anezi, Mowali, or Hadideen, but I had no claim on the forbearance of any Shammar who might be out, and I knew that they often cross the Euphrates, and go great distances after plunder. About midnight we heard voices behind us. We were fortunately near a small tumulus, and got behind it. Then, creeping to the top, I could distinguish against the horizon a large party of Bedaween coming after us at a gallop. Mares do not neigh at the approach of other mares, which is one of the reasons why the Bedaween prefer them to horses for their own use. The horsemen passed close to the mound, but we kept moving round it, so that our proximity was not suspected. The sounds grew faint in the distance, then ceased altogether, and, mounting again, we altered our course several points of the compass towards the west, in order to describe diverging lines with the marauding expedition, whoever they might be. At dawn the horizon was clear all round us, and the appearance of a great marsh, which I had visited before, proved that my steering had not been wild, as sailors say. A solitary old tomb with some pretensions to Saracenic architecture, revered under the name of Sheikh Abraca, suggested that we could not be more than a few miles from a village lying to the west of our course; and our two villagers of Sfiri, being somewhat damaged by hard riding and spare diet, preferred seceding in that direction to persevering in the regimen. I

was thus reduced to a single follower, who was staunch. A sudden charge of several hundred gazelles in a close troop was a beautiful sight, but they seemed to run towards us instead of from us; their flight was soon explained by the spectacle of a huge wolf in full chase behind them. We charged the wolf, revolver in hand, but he made off as hard as he could. Not wishing to be unjust to our good mares, we pulled up, satisfied with having spoiled his sport, and we made for the marsh, where I knew there was a spring of fine water. This marsh, called Midih, is formed by the river Chalus, which flows from the hills of Aintab, through Aleppo, to lose itself on the plain. There must be some underground channel for the escape of so much water, especially as the marsh is always at the same level, while the river swells and recedes. The Chalus is still as full of fish as when described by Xenophon. I lay on the ground for half an hour at the spring to let my mare have her breakfast in the long grass beside me. My Arab was less wisely tiring his by galloping furiously after a large wild boar, which had come trotting confidently along the plain to drink at the spring, and had turned sharp off when he saw me there. It is astonishing how swift are those unwieldy-looking animals, and my man returned without his game. We have now come on here, where some Hadideen tents invite us to rest until my companion's mare is able to proceed, for that last gallop quite finished her. I while away the time by writing.

Gibbon says that Berœa and Aleppo were one. He

is mistaken. They were two cities, some fifteen or sixteen miles apart, and, at the time when he supposes Aleppo was called Berœa, its name was Chalybon. The remains of Berœa are very extensive. Though no buildings are still standing, one can trace their foundations, which show that it must have possessed some fine edifices. The acropolis is as large as that of Aleppo, and seems to have been very similar to it in construction. It is, however, like the town, in a completely ruined state.

LETTER XIII

Ferdoon Settlement—Agriculture—Bread Riots—Currency—Mussulman Animosity—Turkish Administration—Decrease of Population—Statistics—Reforms.

Aishah: September 26, 1859.

AN unusually dry season has told sadly on the crops, and wheat is up to famine prices. Much distress will, it is feared, ensue. The settled Arabs may not suffer; because, if there is a diminution of quantity, it may be made up to them by the increased price. But those who are disposed to settle may be deterred by the expense of buying seed. The difficulties were already too great to bear any addition. The want of protection on the part of the government forces agriculture to decline. The tiller of the soil has to take his chance of reaping his crop, or of seeing it carried off or destroyed. When unfavourable weather comes to swell the obstacles, there can be but little hope. The existing resources of the art of husbandry in this country are altogether incompetent to meet such a contingency. The alternations of rain and sunshine, so necessary to vegetation, are not often subject to irregularity in this climate; and the husbandman can therefore calculate with some degree of certainty on the growth to maturity of the seed he consigns to the

soil, without seeking to use any of those precautions which a more advanced state of knowledge and a less propitious climate have introduced. A most primitive species of plough is his only implement, and, after the field is prepared by furrows only four or five inches deep, and the seed is covered by crossing them, nothing further is done, no care taken, until the grain is ripe. This poor culture generally succeeds, however, when the season is not very bad; but the cultivator is helpless, and the crop is lost, if he is not aided by the weather. The latter alternative having befallen the country now, apprehensions of great scarcity are entertained. A mob of several hundred Mussulmans and Christians accordingly assembled a few days ago in the streets of Aleppo, complaining loudly of the high price of wheat, which they attributed to culpable speculations on the part of the members of the provincial council, in monopolising the produce of the country to sell it at their own rate, and to the want of energy and zeal on the part of the Governor-General in adopting remedial measures. On hearing what was going on, the Pasha proceeded to enquire into the nature of a movement which appeared seriously to threaten the tranquillity of the town. Placards, full of seditious expressions and personal abuse of the authorities, had meanwhile been posted up on the walls of the bazaars. Some of the rioters were arrested. The first examined declared that he and his family had been without food for two days, because wheat was so dear. His house was immediately searched: ten bushels of wheat, two sacks

of flour, and a sufficient quantity of bread for present use, were found. This, and subsequent discoveries of a similar character, gave a different turn to the enquiry, which resulted in the convicting of two notables of the town, with several other persons less conspicuous, of having incited the disturbance. They were all put on horseback, and exiled. For once, the Turkish authorities were active and resolute.

At Aintab, also, there have been some disturbances. A crowd gathered round a house whence sounds of festivity were proceeding, and, after breaking open the door, reproached its owner, a member of the provincial council, with his enjoyment of abundance while the people were starving. The Governor repaired to the spot, and succeeded in dispersing the mob. On the following day, a man of well-known turbulent character, who had been present at the previous riot, assembled a number of vagabonds, and plundered the Mufti's house of all the corn stored in it. That of the most influential notable of the place was next assailed, but he saved it by distributing loaves of bread among the crowd, and thus pacifying them for a time. The tumult soon recommenced, however, and more violently than ever; for almost the whole population of the town attacked the Governor's residence. That dignitary barricaded himself in his private room, and nothing could induce him to come out of it. The same notable who had given bread to the mob diverted their fury by conducting them to the principal corn-store of Aintab, which he opened and placed at their disposal, telling

the owner that he would pay the value of its contents. The whole of the grain was at once carried off by the insurgents. The Mufti also took an active part in quelling the affray. He emptied a mosque used by the government as a flour-magazine, sending the flour in it to the public ovens, to be baked and given to the poor. An outcry was then raised against the Governor for not having taken previous steps to relieve the wants of the people; and the notable, who had become so prominent, was proclaimed Governor. The chief of the police attempted to restore order; two men were killed, and several wounded. Finally, the ex-Governor, with his retinue and officials, left the place to the notable, who was perhaps at the bottom of the whole affair. The government, however, has not allowed him to enjoy the position in which he had been placed by the will of his fellow-townsmen; for a new Governor has been sent to Aintab.

At Marash, there is a considerable degree of excitement amongst the Armenians on account of the wholesale proselytising of their church by the Protestant missionaries. One of the converts to the latter persuasion has been stripped, fastened to a tree, and nearly strangled by the Armenians on the road to Zeitoon; they finally banished him and his family from their district, on his persisting in his fidelity to his new faith. They have threatened to kill any missionary venturing to tamper with their allegiance to their church, and have offered a reward for the denouncing of each convert. This persecution, as in the early ages

of Christianity, produces only enthusiasm on the part of the proselytes, who glory in what they call their martyrdom.

Disorders continue among the Ansairi. Last week three hundred of them went from near Lattakia to the district of Csair, lying between Antioch and Jisr Shogl, where they attacked the villages of Miredj and Mesetbeh, and carried off all the grain they could find. A Dehlibash with ten horsemen was sent by the government to protect the villages, but did not venture within five miles of those which had been plundered. The motive attributed to the assailants was a blood feud of eighteen years' standing. The Governor of Jisr Shogl, whom I mentioned in a previous letter, took this opportunity of playing the robber himself. He accused a man of the district of Csair of murder in the conflict, and attacked and plundered the two villages of Ferfereh and Kerbiaz for concealing him.

A curious instance of the mode of conducting public business in this country has just occurred at Aleppo. The farmer of the customs of Northern Syria had given general satisfaction in the administration of his department. Besides the customs he had farmed the tithes of a part of the province for two years. His contract was considered too advantageous to him by the provincial council, which summarily cancelled it on learning the probable profit, notwithstanding that the same council had previously sanctioned it. The farmer had collected a portion of the tithes, and had made payments to the treasury. It proved that the two amounts did not

counterbalance each other; he was a debtor of about a thousand pounds, and a creditor for two thousand. The council ordered payment of the debt without taking the credit into account, on the plea that the two sums belonged to two different years. In vain the farmer combated this mode of proceeding, and, finding that he must pay or go to prison, he abandoned all hope of recovering the balance due to him, and absconded.

Halaf-es-Shehemi, sheikh of the tribe of Ferdoon, is one of the Bedaween in a state of transition between nomadism and location. He also has obtained exemption from tithes for two years, and is preparing land for sowing. I have come here to see his embryo settlement, situated between the shore of the Salt Lake and a stream bearing the encouraging name of Nahr Dehab, the Golden River. Whence the epithet is derived, I cannot say, but I think the stream must be identical with the Daradax, which Xenophon mentions as running near the palace of Belesis destroyed with its large and beautiful park by Cyrus. I believe its site to have been where I was last year when with the Fedan Anezi, and this river takes that course. The Ferdoon are still under tents, but they say they will build cottages next year if their agricultural experiment should succeed. I have not a doubt that it will, if they can surmount the first obstacle in their way, the exorbitant price of seed-corn. This position will then form the second in a proposed cordon of settled tribes from Chalcis, held by the Weldi, to Berœa, where the Hadideen seem disposed to remain; which

will protect the plains behind them from the inroads of the nomadic tribes, and gradually extend in width into the desert. The Weldi are satisfied with the result of their first year. The Ferdoon are sanguine of success. The Hadideen were never an unruly tribe, and have always been faithful and useful as the shepherds of the towns. Their location, now that they are well provided with fire-arms, and have proved their bravery in war, will greatly strengthen and further the scheme in process of realisation. Haji Batran has done all he could to frustrate it, and, being backed by his official authority as agent for the government in the desert, his opposition has been very formidable. It would, to be sure, have been more so, were it not perfectly understood that its motive is entirely personal, for I have difficulty in giving credence to the report he assiduously spreads of his being instructed by the government to follow the course he has adopted. The settlers see through his artifices, which they attribute to the fact that his services would be supplanted by the cultivating tribes; and, on several occasions when they have talked of abandoning their fields and returning to their former habits, they have been kept to their work by their desire not to let him triumph over them. Seeing that he was getting the worst of it, Haji Batran went lately to the Governor-General of Aleppo, who understands little of the complicated politics of the desert, and so bewildered him with ominous forebodings of disorders about to arise from the unusual concourse of Bedaween in this province, that he obtained the exclusive and supreme

control over the tribes and their interests in exchange for an unrealisable engagement to hold himself responsible for all losses by depredation. Batran thus secured to himself the power of persecuting the settlers, and bringing them back to their former condition, while he could deter other tribes from settling, as they are disposed to do. Good luck, or rather the blessing attendant on a good cause, shaped his course otherwise than he had rough-hewn it. When returning to the desert with a large party of his followers, he found a caravan of forty-two remarkably fine mules grazing without a guard; the temptation was too much for him; he sent them off to Asia Minor for sale. He had been seen, however, and recognised. The mules, unfortunately for him, were the property of an influential merchant. The evidence against him was complete. He is, therefore, in prison, waiting the decision of his fate; and the settled Arabs have time to breathe.

Another portion of the Weldi tribe, numbering about five hundred tents, has just crossed the Euphrates from Mesopotamia, to join Mehemed-al-Ganim. They will probably become cultivators also, if they like what they see of his new condition. Trade is deriving palpable advantages from the presence of so numerous a class of consumers of manufactured and colonial goods. A new species of cloth has been introduced. The Arab women wear only a common blue dress of native manufacture; a cheaper and stronger unbleached stuff from Manchester is being bought up, and dyed with the coarse indigo sold in the market, for the purpose of

underselling the manufacturers of the Syrian towns, which proves an excellent speculation. The handkerchiefs worn by both men and women on their heads, are also now exclusively of British manufacture. No such movement has taken place among the Bedaween since the year 1809 when a person of the name of Lascaris de Vintimille was employed by the first Napoleon to introduce French goods in the desert, which he sold to the Arabs under cost price, with the view of gaining influence over them to facilitate his designs on British India. M. Lascaris spent three years with the Bedaween, and formed a confederation of tribes ready to march on condition of being provisioned by France. He died at Cairo before transmitting his papers to his government, and it is said that they fell into the hands of the late Mr. Salt, our Consul-General in Egypt at that time. The Arabs still talk of M. Lascaris in a way which leaves no doubt of his having succeeded in his mission, and they perfectly understood that the importation of French wares, sold to them so cheap, was not his primary object. The present more legitimate endeavour to check the overlapping of the agricultural by the pastoral territory of Syria, is not so congenial to their ideas as a military expedition at foreign expense, but it has also the advantage of having been prepared by similar means, as many of the Bedaween served in the irregular troops raised by England in Turkey during the Crimean war, and they have brought home with them a lively sense of the justice and even generosity with which they were treated.

The British goods they now purchase so freely are, moreover, cheap and substantial, and the Arabs feel the benefit to them of this new trade, while those who have settled do not fail to vaunt their gain by cultivation. It was full time that some defence should be raised against the nomads, who have pushed their predatory incursions as far west as the banks of the Orontes, and the tide of whose devastation has even reached the sea in two places, near Acre, and between Tripoli and Lattakia; while the villagers have gradually receded before it, and more rapidly of late years on account of the great increase of the flocks and herds of the Arabs, who impede cultivation for the purpose of securing pasture. The agricultural class of the population has thus been driven into the towns, and the Turks have boasted of the increase of their inhabitants. But political economists regard the migration of the rural population to towns as one of the worst symptoms of the state of a country. The Turks do not like statistics, and they are right. They have less to gain by that science in the conviction it would give them of their decline, than they would lose in that conviction being imparted to others. It is notorious that they do not allow even a common statement of imports and exports to be made from the registers of their custom-houses. Those who would know the real state of Turkey, must wear out their lives in the country, laboriously adding fact to fact until sufficient data are amassed. In Europe, a careful examination of a few figures and totals in published tables shows where the

greatest material development is to be found in states, for we cannot now form an opinion of their relative power by mere intellectual superiority, and the world is no longer divided between Greek and barbarian. When one quotes statistics to Turkish politicians, they reply by talking of reforms. In the island of Cyprus, there were, thirty years ago, eighty thousand Mussulmans and forty thousand Christians; reforms have not prevented there being now sixty thousand Christians and forty thousand Mussulmans. Mr. David Urquhart once answered a grand vizier, who boasted of Turkish reforms, that their only reforms were in the cut of their pantaloons and tie of their cravats. They have certainly reformed their army, which, with all its shortcomings, is preferable to janissaries and irregulars; but look at the loss it has entailed on the country. At the lowest computation, three hundred thousand young men, future fathers of families had they lived, have perished in the ranks of that army during the last twenty years. There is no such drain on the Christian population. Things are not in a worse state, however, than might be expected under the circumstances. The expectations entertained were exaggerated. On the accession of Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid a new era opened for Turkey, and an improved system of government was inaugurated by the Edict of Gulhaneh. More was expected from this enunciation of good intentions than was warranted by the state of the country generally, estimated by appearances in the capital, while the provinces were incapable of keeping pace with it in the

career of improvement. Old vices of the administration could be more or less eradicated under the eye of a well-meaning sovereign and an enlightened ministry, with the vigilance of foreign representatives to watch over their efforts, whether it be to assist or to expose weakness. Some little advance in the same direction may doubtless have been made also in the management of provincial affairs, but it is far from being such as could meet the expectations of those who believed in the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire. I consider the origin of their disappointment to lie in the facts, that the provinces were judged by the capital, that their capability to receive reforms was overrated, and that the reforms attempted were not compatible with their actual condition.

LETTER XIV.

Damascus—Ansairi Prisoners—The Khalifs—Druzes—Maronites—Mount Lebanon.

Damascus: January 20, 1860.

I HAVE been here about three weeks, having come leisurely in eight days by Hama and Homs. This is certainly a charming place in winter, when it is not too hot for the enjoyment of long rides over its richly wooded plain, or on the banks of the Barrada, whose clear waters ripple pleasantly on their pebbly bed, so different from the muddy rivers I have as yet seen in Syria. The spot of St. Paul's conversion is shown to travellers as that now occupied by a small Protestant cemetery, but I suppose it has no better title to acceptance as such than other fanciful sites of historical and sacred events in Palestine. One of the resorts of pilgrims is the village of Abraham, which I too visited of course, but without much faith in its identity. Abraham became king of Damascus, if one may believe the Damascene historian Nicolaüs, on whose authority rests the claim of the village; as king, he would scarcely have more connection with one village than another, and the town existed at the time of his migration this way from Haran to Hebron, if Josephus be not in error in attri-

buting its foundation to Uz, the son of Aram and grandson of Shem. However all this may be, it is certainly one of the most ancient cities in the world. Its population is now about a hundred and ten thousand, of whom fourteen thousand are Christians. The latter inhabit the quarter in which the street called 'straight' of the Acts of the Apostles may still be recognised, as well as the part of the town-wall where St. Paul was let down from a window; such features of the place being not unlikely to retain their outward appearance and traditional record. The houses of the wealthy inhabitants, whether Mussulmans, Christians, or Jews, are exceedingly spacious and cool, and covered with lavish decoration in oriental taste.

I have seen Ahmed and Tahir Pashas several times, the Governor-General and the Military Commandant. After the fate of the Ansairi prisoners, whom I mentioned in my letter from Hama, I can scarcely refrain from strong language about those functionaries. The prisoners were avowedly in no way implicated in the affair of Ismael Khair Bey, itself an abominable affair on the part of the Pashas, but they have nevertheless been kept here in gaol for upwards of a year, and finally they were all publicly executed last week. Ahmed Pasha especially was quite determined to have them put to death.

I find here two sources of alarm for the tranquillity of Syria, the animosity of the feuds of Lebanon, and the pride of national achievements. The Moslems of Damascus brood sullenly over their fallen greatness.

There are men amongst them, learned in Arab history, who maintain an irritating sense of their past glory. The Druzes come here frequently from the mountain, and from their district in the Hauran, to seek the patronage of high Turkish authorities. The Christians, chiefly Maronites, oppose countermines to every mine undertaken against them, and find foreign agents willing to encourage them, and foment the discord existing between the different sects. Damascus is thus not only one of the hotbeds of strife amongst the different branches of the modern Arab race, but is also the centre of a dangerous recalling to memory of its ancient renown under the Ommiad Khalifs.

From the days of Kahtan Ibn A'bir, as the Arabs call Joktan, son of Eber, of the books of Genesis and Chronicles, and their two other progenitors, Ishmael, who, they believe, married one of his descendants, and Esau, to the seventh century of our era, when Mahomet organised them as a nation, the Arabs seem to have been in the same divided and pastoral state in which they are now to be found in the Syrian desert. One of the laws of their ancient Nabatean confederation, formed at the time of Alexander's invasion of Asia, made it a capital crime to sow corn, build a house, or plant a tree, for they thought man prone to sacrifice his liberty to preserve immovable property. They were then strong enough to defy the Greek power of Antigonus and Demetrius, the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, as later they successfully resisted the attempts of Pompey to bring them under the Roman yoke.

Towards the middle of the fourth century, they were so far under the influence of ideas of progress, that the Gassanide tribe was converted to Christianity in a body, and retained their creed until the year 637, when they were subjugated by the growing power of the Mussulman system, and their sheikh Jabala became a renegade with all his followers. When the prophet of Islam and his immediate successors raised the Arabs to the dignity of a race of conquerors in the world's history, they extended their frontiers to the Indus on the east and Caucasus on the north in Asia, to the Great Desert on the south and the Atlantic on the west in Africa, and to the Pyrenees in Europe. These vast dominions, more comprehensive than those of Alexander the Great, and nearly equal to the Roman Empire, had their first capital at Damascus. The wealth of the khalifs ruling over them was so great that Zobeideh, the wife of Harun al Rashid, is described as wearing robes of silk lined with ermine and slippers embroidered with pearls, while her dishes and drinking cups were of massive gold studded with precious stones; and Almamun had thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry in his palace, and twenty-two thousand Persian carpets, while he presented a Greek ambassador with a tree of pure gold bearing enormous pearls as fruit. In arts and sciences they surpassed Europe. Thus, amongst the offerings brought by the ambassador of Harun al Rashid to Charlemagne, who was in vain struggling to raise his subjects from their state of barbarism, was a watch manufactured at Racca on the Euphrates, which

called forth the admiration of the French court, where nothing so wonderful had ever been seen. Painting and sculpture, being contrary to the doctrines of the Coran, were neglected, but poetry, music, architecture, astronomy, and mathematics, were highly cultivated by the Arabs, and in a manner above all parallel with other nations of the time. Military ardour had given place to the love of letters. The ancient literature of the Greeks was studied at Damascus, Bagdad, Cairo, Racca, Ispahan, Morocco, and Toledo. The works of their historians and philosophers were translated into Arabic, through which language alone some of them were preserved before the recovery of the original text. Grammar became a science amongst the Arabs, and they invented the most perfect system in existence. Libraries and colleges were instituted; in one of the latter six thousand students were maintained gratuitously. Observatories, furnished with gigantic instruments, arose. Laboratories were devoted to chemical experiments. Hospitals offered a field for medical study. The Arabs, who are called by Humboldt the real founders of the physical sciences, were thus the only guardians of civilisation in the middle ages when barbarian invaders from the north had darkened their light in Europe. The first centuries of the Hegira were taken up with triumphant wars; when Charles Martel checked further conquest, and the Ommiad Khalifs had fallen, the era of intellectual culture commenced; it lasted until the middle of the fifteenth century after Christ, when we received the rays of knowledge which

had set on the East. Darkness fell on Asia, and enlightenment dawned in Europe. After their glorious series of military successes under the Ommiad Khalifs of Damascus and Cordova, and after their mental superiority under the Abbasside and Fatimite Khalifs of Bagdad and Egypt, the Arabs were destined to see their vast empire dismembered by the Tartar and Mongolian invaders, who founded new states on its ruins, now concentrated in the Ottoman Empire, falling in its turn. Such are the lessons taught, and reminiscences vaunted, by the learned sheikhs of Damascus, amongst whom is Abd-el-Kader, the Algerian prisoner of France, since pensioned by her and allowed to reside in this city.

The other danger impending at Damascus—that which may arise from the Druze and Maronite controversy—has been grossly misrepresented as regards its origin and respective rights. In the year of the Hegira 386, Abu Ali el Hakim, the sixth of the Fatimite Khalifs, not the third as has been erroneously stated, ascended the throne of Egypt at the early age of eleven. By cursing publicly in the mosques his predecessors the companions of Mahomet, forcing Christians and Jews to become Mussulmans, then insisting on their resuming their former faith, he soon established a name for madness. In the East, madness is tantamount to inspiration. Hakim was thus a prophet. He declared himself a god. All did not believe in him, however, and, while holding converse with angels, he was suddenly assailed and put to death. His followers were dispersed.

Hunted down by the true believers, many of them found their way into Syria, and, seeking safety from persecution, united to make a stand against their enemies by occupying the least accessible heights of Mount Lebanon. From them are descended the Druzes. They took their name from Mohammed Ibn Ismael el Dorazi, or Durzi, or Druzi. This man was the author of a book to prove the divinity of Hakim, and the believers in the book received the surname of its writer.

Towards the close of the sixth century of the Christian era, the small port of Jebail, the ancient Byblos, situated between Beyrout and Tripoli, was inhabited by a population addicted to predatory practices. A monk from the banks of the Orontes, named John Maro, visited them in the hope of reclaiming them from those vices, and making good Christians of them. In this he seems to have failed, but he remained with them as their bishop. John Maro was a man of genius. He acquired such influence and respect all over Syria, that his people, who were called Maronites after him, were able to circumvent all endeavours to bring them into submission to the constituted authorities of the country, and even to give an asylum to refugees from other districts. Outlaws, brigands, rebels, flocked to the growing sect, which thus became more powerful without becoming less disorderly. Like other proscribed persons before them, the Druzes were well received by the Maronites. The two tribes lived together in peace, and were united in all the wars that

swept over Syria; retaining thus their common independence, and descending from their rugged mountains only to plunder the surrounding country.

Sultan Amurath III., towards the end of the sixteenth century, being moved by complaints from the inhabitants of Damascus, Sidon, Beyrout, and Tripoli, forced their last retreats; and they were then first reduced to obedience and the payment of tribute. A governor was appointed, but, as was the case in all the Turkish provinces at that time, he was allowed to rule without control. One of his successors became celebrated in the beginning of the seventeenth century under the name of Fakir ed Din. He was a Druze. The state of the empire then enabled an ambitious and resolute man to extend his power; and this governor encroached on that of the governors of Damascus, Tripoli, and Sidon. An expedition was prepared to overthrow him, but the wily Druze conceived a singular plan of defence. He went to Europe, declared himself a descendant of Godfrey of Bouillon, and represented the Druzes to have originated in the retreat of some crusaders to Mount Lebanon when Saladin took Jerusalem, and asserted that their name was derived from that of the principal knight amongst them, the Count of Dreux. The fable took, and interest was made in his favour. He returned to his government, a greater man than he went from it, for it was made to include the cities on the coast. But his tyranny and depredations were such that he was again attacked. After a long and obstinate resistance to Sultan Amu-

rath IV., he was taken and put to death at Constantinople. Then came the governors of the Shehab family, who were Mussulmans from Mecca, and claimed kindred with the Prophet. At the time when the Turkish provinces were farmed out to speculators who sublet districts to local chiefs, and before the system of centralisation was adopted in the last reign, Beshir Shehab became the first of that line of governors of Mount Lebanon through a pecuniary arrangement of this kind. He was a man of some ability, and possessed of much determination. Inflamed by ambition, he bethought him of supplanting his immediate superior, Abdulla Pasha of Acre, from whom he had received his appointment. Beshir Jumblat, the principal Druze, was his abettor in this insurrection. A battle was fought near Sidon, and the rebels were defeated. Shehab escaped to Egypt; Jumblat to the desert, where the Bedaween made him a prisoner, and gave him up to Abdulla Pasha. A man of rare intellect ruled in Egypt, Mehemed Ali, who had raised himself from the ranks of the Albanian irregular troops to a position almost equal to that of the Sultan, and was then inaugurating a policy of reform superior to the feeble efforts of his sovereign towards a similar end. Mehemed Ali aspired at the revival of an Arab throne. He received the refugee with eager hopes of making him of use to his great design. They soon came to an understanding, in pursuance of which Mehemed Ali negotiated a peace between his new confederate and Abdulla Pasha, by casting all blame for the past on

Jumblat. The latter was accordingly strangled in prison, and the Emir Beshir Shehab returned to the government of Mount Lebanon, which he held from the Porte on the recommendation of the Governor-General of Acre. The attack on Syria by Mehemed Ali, in 1831, brought thirty thousand men under the best general of the East, his adopted son Ibrahim, to besiege Acre. Abdulla Pasha defended his post for six months, and surrendered. The Emir Beshir was active in the cause of his Egyptian patron, from whom, when victorious, he hoped to obtain the supreme government of Syria. France encouraged the rebellious vassal, Mehemed Ali, in his attempt to wrest a province from his sovereign; and the Maronites, to gain support abroad, espoused the same cause. This combination of interests opened a new vista of ambition to the time-serving Emir, who declared himself a Christian for the double purpose of attaching the Maronites to his fortunes, and of placing himself with them under the protection of a great European power. The battle of Konia was fought, and lost by the Sultan. Syria was annexed to Egypt. During nine years Ibrahim Pasha governed this country, and common justice obliges even the enemies of his usurpation to admit that it derived great material advantages from this period of its history. The Emir Beshir, meanwhile, had been deceived by Mehemed Ali, who declined to reward the traitor, though he accepted the benefits of the treachery. Mount Lebanon became again disturbed, through the machinations of its dis-

appointed governor. Ibrahim suppressed the revolt easily enough, but in a way which called the attention of Europe to his system of administration of public affairs in Syria, which was successful, but ferocious. A conference was held in London in 1840; Syria was signed back to the Sultan; the government of Egypt was made hereditary in the family of Mehemed Ali under the mere suzeraineté of the Porte. When this arrangement was opposed in its execution, Beyrout, Sidon, and Acre were taken by the British fleet with a few Austrian and Turkish vessels, and the Egyptians were driven out of Syria. The Emir Beshir was removed to Malta, whence he proceeded to Constantinople, and there died.

Beshir Kassem, his nephew, was appointed by the Porte governor of Mount Lebanon. He was a quiet, good sort of man, without energy as without ambition, but possessing a sense of justice. Some Druzes quarrelled with some Maronites; some villages were burnt. A Turkish pasha was sent to take the thing in hand. He soon found out that it would be impossible to get the Druzes to submit to the authority of a family whose founder, the Emir Beshir Shehab, had betrayed and caused the violent and ignominious death of their most revered chief, Beshir Jumblat. Omer Pasha, the future commander-in-chief of the Turkish army on the Danube and in the Crimea, was made governor over both the Druzes and the Maronites. He was efficient and popular. For a time the mountain enjoyed tranquillity. The cry of Maronite privileges was now

raised for the first time. The right to choose their own governor of their own religion was claimed for them. The Porte tried in vain to reason with the foreign cabinets enouncing this novel idea, but was obliged to yield; faintly murmuring that the Sultan had never conferred any privileges whatsoever on the Maronites, and that, if he had not, no one else could. France wanted a Shehab; persisted even in representing that family as Christian, and as elected governors by the Maronites; whereas it was notorious that they were Moslems, had then feigned conversion, and reassumed Mahometanism after the fall of the Emir Beshir, though occasionally again pretending to be Christians when it suited their purpose; and anyone who looks into the case will see that they were first raised to power by the Pasha of Acre, and next by the Pasha of Egypt. Prince Metternich, not fully cognisant of the subject in all its bearings, proposed a middle course, out of which, when adopted, have grown all the evils of the last twenty years on Mount Lebanon. Two administrations were formed, one for the Druzes, and the other for the Maronites, with Turkish garrisons in the large villages, but without any authority vested in their commanders—divided government and divided responsibility resolving themselves as usual into no government and no responsibility. The Maronites and Druzes, let it be remembered, do not everywhere occupy separate districts, but form in many places a mixed population. The choice of persons was also curious. The Maronite governor, the Emir Haydar, was of a Druze

family converted to Christianity, or feigning conversion; and the Druze governor, Ahmed Roslan, did not belong at all to the influential classes, which are confined to the Jumblatieh and the Wezbekieh, both of those powerful clans being thus opposed to his authority. After a long continuance of disorders arising from the defects of the arrangement, the Emir Haydar died. This happened during the Crimean war, when Turkey was under great obligations to Europe, and could not but adopt the suggestion of an ally in arms. France took advantage of that circumstance to obtain the nomination of an adherent of her own. The Emir Beshir Ahmed, whose antecedents were not his best recommendation, was brought forward. He had changed his religion several times, and no one knew when he was Maronite, Druze, or Mussulman. Complete anarchy prevailed during his administration. Pillage and murder were of daily occurrence. Three years ago, this deplorable state of matters came to a head in a general insurrection of the Maronites. The Emir Beshir Ahmed was deposed. Athanasius Shaïn took his place. Foreign patronage was openly avowed. The governor himself hoisted the French flag, declaring Mount Lebanon a province of France. Robbery and carnage reigned over the country. Women were horribly ill-treated, and then massacred, by the Maronites; amongst whom were the wife and two daughters of Diab Kassem, whose bodies were left, by order of Shaïn, exposed for several days on a public road without any covering, and finally dragged to the foot of an old

wall, which was thrown down upon them. Last year, a quarrel about a sheep that had strayed caused a fight between the Maronites and the Druzes, ending in the burning of the village of Beit Mari where it commenced. The Maronites were the aggressors. Since then, there has been no renewal of conflicts, but people think that the priests of the Maronite Church are forming an extensive conspiracy, and distributing arms and ammunition for a future war of extermination against the Druzes.

These are the leading facts of the case, which I have carefully verified on the spot. How far they are consistent with the version accepted in Europe is another matter.

LETTER XV.

Trachonitis—Ashtaroth Karnaim—Forest of Ephraim—Gerasa—The Jabbok—Salhaan Arabs—Sheikh Goblan—Ramoth Gilead—The Jordan—Jericho—Jerusalem—The Holy Places—The Mosque of Omar—Greek and Roman Catholic Squabbles—France and Russia.

Jerusalem: February 6, 1860.

ON leaving Damascus, we kept far to the east of the usual route by Cesarea Philippi, and entered the ancient Ituræa, formerly a country of the greatest possible fertility, now a naked desert, lying between the lofty Hermon and the low range of hills traversing that part of Bashan which received the name of Batanæa after the Captivity. Ituræa is now called Yedoor, bringing the name nearer to that of its first settler, Jetur, the son of Ishmael. We crossed the river Pharpar, and slept at Kesweh, a wretched village on the site apparently of one of the ancient towns in the tetrarchy of Philip, I know not which. Rising early, I strolled about, and questioned the villagers on their condition. It is the same as I have always found on the margin of the desert. This illustration of it, however, is almost more remarkable than any other can be. A district of rich soil, which possessed a hundred villages twenty years ago, now tenanted by only a few lingering peasants, destined soon to follow their kindred to the hills ranging

along the seaboard, driven westwards by the Bedaween. Mounting our horses, we took a still more easterly course, which brought us to the Leja, the ancient Trachonitis, and still more ancient Argob. This is the stronghold of the Druzes of the Hauran when they rebel against the government, for no troops can follow them through the intricacies of its wonderful formation of basalt cropping up, as far as the eye can reach, in rugged boulders of fantastic shape from ten to twenty feet above the plain, and so thickset that there is not anywhere a path of fifty yards without obstacles difficult even to climb and scramble over. The land around this singular region is splendid, and may have well sufficed to support the many small towns and villages whose ruins occupy its impregnable recesses. We visited one of them called Musmeih, the ancient Phæno, and found fine architectural remains of low Greek art, with many inscriptions in that language, highly ornamented temples almost entire, well-paved streets, houses still roofed with great slabs of stone, and their massive doors of single blocks of basalt swinging on their pivots, ready to be inhabited. Within sight were many such fallen cities, with thousands of acres of fine arable land spread around the Leja, showing tracks of watercourses for irrigation, and now yielding only pasture for the sheep and camels of the Bedaween. Returning westwards to seek shelter for the night, we came to a Druze village called Jebab, where we were received with enthusiasm as soon as it was known that we were English, and frequently assured by the assembled vil-

lagers, as we passed our evening round a blazing fire, that there is no place in the world like England.

Early dawn found us again in the saddle, and following the line of the great Moslem pilgrimage through the ancient district of Gaulanitis, now Jaulan, to Eshmiskin, one of its stations, where we slept. The traffic created by the annual passage of thousands of pilgrims has made a prosperous place of that and many others of their halting-places, where enormous profits are realised on what is sold to them. Next day we passed into Auranitis, the Hauran of proverbial fertility, but altogether uncultivated. Passing Edrei, one of the capitals of Bashan, whose ruins are now scarcely distinguishable, we reached the fortified village of Mezarib, identified by some topographers with Ashtaroth Karnaim. If, as is said, the epithet of the Horned applies to two peaks, it must be sought elsewhere, for there are none such at Mezarib; but the theory of attributing the horns to the moon, whose worship was practised at the place, seems preferable. It has all the appearance of having been an important place, and, if it was not Ashtaroth Karnaim, there is no other recorded city near the spot. A castle, built three centuries and a half ago by Sultan Selim I. for the accommodation and protection of the pilgrims, is the only considerable edifice now standing at this once renowned shrine of the Syrian Venus. There is a small lake, containing an island covered with ruins, perhaps of her temple; and a stream issuing from it, and flowing westwards, is now called Yarmuk, formerly Hieromax,

one of the tributaries of the Jordan. We struck off due south over mountains clothed with the oaks of Bashan, and a long day brought us to Hawara, an Arab village plunged in the utmost destitution by a recent attack of Bedaween. The huts were absolutely empty, even their doors and shutters gone, and the inhabitants had neither clothes enough to keep them from suffering greatly from the bitter cold of the nights, nor food to eat, in so far as we could ascertain by questioning them. They told us that twenty-five villages, of which theirs was one, had thus been plundered, a few days before we came, by a single incursion of Sheikh Mehemed Doohi with a couple of thousand Weled Ali and Beni Sachar horsemen.

We had an agreeable ride next day through the forest of Ephraim. Why it was called by the name of a tribe whose lot was on the other side of the Jordan, is more than I have been able to comprehend. It is a picturesque hilly country, covered with noble timber. Joab's military skill in manœuvring Absalom into it, is fully illustrated by the thickness of the wood and the ruggedness of the ground. By almost any one of the great oaks, a fugitive might be knocked from his horse, and left on the low branches, which in many places give no passage of any height between two trees. The evening found us at Soof, where Arabs live in huts in winter, and under tents in summer, on the produce of numerous flocks of goats. Being the only site of an ancient town we saw in that region, and having all the appearance of former greatness, while the track we had followed was

evidently the main artery of an almost impenetrable district, and would not probably avoid any other place of past importance, the thought struck me that Soof might be Mahanaim, which has not yet been identified. However this may be, we had no reason to carry away an agreeable impression of it, for we passed a wretched night, pestered for money by several hundred Arabs, showing an unmistakably Jewish cast of features, as well as instincts. Before leaving next morning, the controversy became a scuffle. A captain and two sergeants of the Sultan's regular cavalry had been sent with us by Ahmed Pasha of Damascus, but, on the proposal being made to them to draw their swords and clear a way for us out of the screaming mob, they evinced no sympathy for the *ultima ratio regum*, and we were obliged to purchase, at an exorbitant price, the freedom of the Sultan's highway. A couple of hours of descent from the wooded mountains of Ephraim, arrayed before us a spectacle capable of making us look kindly even on a party of rascally Arabs, who had escorted us from Soof to give a colour to their extortion. We were soon surrounded by the gorgeous remains of Gerasa. While rambling, amazed and delighted, along the great portico a mile in length, at one end the circular forum adorned with columns, at the other the fine temple of the sun, with the two theatres and other massive edifices, scarcely injured by time and earthquakes, studding the large area of the town, I could not repress the reflection that, if the Decapolis reared such cities under the pagan government of the Anto-

nines, after Vespasian had subjugated it, what is to be said of the Mussulman government of the Sultans, under which they have been mere ruins in a desert during so many centuries?

When we moved on from Gerasa, our path led us down the right bank of the river Jabbok, enclosed in a narrow and very deep ravine. We came to a small village called Burmeh, occupying the site of an ancient fortified town, possibly another candidate for the honours of Mahanaim. This was more like the description of Peniel, where Jacob wrestled with the angel, and more likely than Soof to have an opportunity of offending Gideon, by refusing help to his troops in pursuit of the Midianites. That Burmeh was Mahanaim is, I think, a theory worthy of the consideration of competent judges. We crossed the clear stream of the Jabbok, probably by the same ford which Jacob's family and flocks traversed when he sent them to meet Esau, for this seemed to be the natural line of route towards the south. Passing thus from the territory of Og, king of Bashan, to that of Sihon, king of the Amorites, we climbed a high and steep mountain, on which at nightfall we came to a camp of the Salhaan tribe of Bedaween. The Sheikh seemed much surprised to see us, but his reception was not unkind. When seated together in his tent, he addressed a number of questions to us with regard to our having penetrated unannounced into that part of the country; and, finally, having apparently abandoned the attempt to understand how we came to be there, he rose, mounted his mare, and disappeared

in the darkness around us. The position was high, the winter was severe, and, one whole side of the tent being open, we spent rather an airy night. As the sun, rising over the eastern heights, began to dispel the chilly gloom in which we were steeped, our host was to be seen riding down the face of the hill towards us, accompanied by three or four Bedaween horsemen. They came straight to the tent in which we were sitting, and, dismounting, took their places beside us. After the usual salutations, we were emphatically told that the principal figure, a sulky-looking Arab in a red embroidered cloak, was Goblan, the great sheikh of all the Salhaan. Repressing the impulse to reply that we had never said he was n't, we made some desultory remark about the pleasure of his acquaintance. He then enquired of us whether we were aware that no one could pass those mountains without his permission, and quoted precedents to prove his postulate. We answered that it might all be very true, but that we had come up one side of the mountains, and must go down the other. Goblan did not appreciate our mode of reasoning, said it was useless wasting time in conversation, and invited us civilly enough to mount and follow him. We rode for a couple of hours, over beautifully wooded hills, to a sheltered spot, where we found the ruins of a walled city. In an open space stood the tents of Goblan and his immediate retinue, and, alighting, we entered the principal one. On enquiring, we were told that the name of the place was Jilad, and that it had never before been visited by travellers. We had been led off

the usual road from Gerasa to Jerusalem, which passes some ten miles farther west by the modern town of Es Salt, which has been thought to represent Ramoth Gilead. It appears more natural that the ancient strong place, still bearing the name of Jilad, and displaying in perfection the character of Ramoth heights, to complete the title, should be the real site; while Es Salt may be, as it was once supposed to be, Machærus, where John the Baptist was beheaded. While I was deep in the study of our map, Bible in hand, Goblan interrupted me by broaching another subject of some delicacy. He had given, he said, hospitable orders, fatal to the arrival at maturity of a lamb cropping the grass before the tent, but, before the sacrifice was performed, and a bond of amity thereby concluded between us, we must distinctly understand each other. Being invited to proceed, he told us we were going to rest an hour, then regale ourselves on the lamb, take a dozen of his best horsemen as a guard as far as the Jordan, and give him the honour of showing us the way himself; but . . . . . But what? Hitherto he had conducted the negotiation with all the polish and ability of an accomplished diplomatist. Now his manner descended to the coarse laconism of a garotting ticket-of-leave man, and he told us simply to hand over our money. Knowing the exact amount of authority vested in the Sultan's dragoons, and feeling that we were entirely in the power of the Sheikh, we soon made up our minds to give the money and proceed on our journey. We took an unprofitable satisfaction, however, in refusing the

offer of coffee, and in saving the life of the lamb. We mounted, and, escorted by Goblan and his Arabs, whether we would or not, we scaled the remaining heights of Gilead. The descent into the valley of the Jordan, which wound its way like a silver thread to the distant molten-lead-like surface of the Dead Sea, encased in the rugged cliffs of Moab, was magnificent as we crept along the precipitous brows of the mountain, then plunged into deep ravines encumbered by huge masses of rock. We had little intercourse with our escort, whose company, after all, may not have been quite unavailing, for we saw some wild-looking Bedaween on the way, who glanced wistfully as we passed with Goblan's people. When we were nearing the plain, and the daylight was waning fast, the Sheikh pulled up, and rode alongside of us. He remarked that we must naturally be much pleased with his guidance over the mountains and guardianship of our personal safety. The remark did not elicit any very lively expression of enthusiasm on our part. That seemed to be a good revolver in our belt—a very good tabanja. We would surely give him a tabanja for the trouble he had taken. No answer having been vouchsafed, Goblan rode on. After another mile or two, he reined in again, and the word tabanja was suggestively muttered from beneath his cloak. Still no answer; this was more than Salhaan patience could brook. A few hurried words to his followers, and half a dozen lances crossed our path. The Turkish captain expostulated mildly. Goblan told him he would eat six

dragoons any morning for his breakfast, and the captain subsided. There we stood a full half-hour, on a fine night in the valley of the Jordan, with Anglo-Saxon obstinacy listening to the everlasting tabanja. The Arabs would not attack us now, for we were well mounted and armed, and the difference of respective numerical strength was not so great as in the camp. At last the lances were raised with a threat that justice would be done at Jericho. We pushed on rapidly through the rich tropical vegetation of the plain, here thirteen hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean; reached Bethabara, and forded the Jordan, whose waters reached our saddle-bows, at the spot where Christ was baptised by John. After another hour's riding, we found ourselves trying to sleep in a filthy mud hut at Jericho, with the faint echo of tabanja meeting our ears from the opposite side of the fire, where the disconsolate Goblan sat sighing over the coveted object. I dropped asleep, and, when I awoke in the morning, he was gone.

When our horses were being prepared, we walked through the miserable assemblage of hovels called Jericho, with a single square tower bearing the spurious title of the house of Zaccheus. The ancient city stood more than a mile from the spot, as indicated by an extensive field of mounds. The road to Jerusalem is one long ascent over a dreary region supposed to be the scene of our Lord's fasting and temptation. To one part of it is assigned the charitable act of the good Samaritan. Robbers are said still to lie occasionally

concealed by the roadside; and our captain and sergeants, unmindful now of Soof and Goblan, made a gallant display of chivalry, charging on in front, firing off their carbines, and swearing they had put to flight I know not how many men in buckram suits and Kendal green. Late in the afternoon we came to Bethany, and, turning the flank of the Mount of Olives, suddenly opened out the striking panorama of the City of David—finer by far from the east than that which hails the pilgrim's approach by the ordinary road from Jaffa. Crossing the Valley of Jehoshaphat with its many tombs, we entered the Gate of St. Stephen, and soon suffered the bathos of alighting at the door of a respectable hotel.

I have now been a week at Jerusalem, going the round of the sights, some of absorbing interest, others of revolting absurdity. The first was, of course, the Holy Sepulchre, then King David's tomb, the Mount of Olives and the Chapel of the Ascension, Gethsemane, the village of Emmaus, and finally Bethlehem. They are all too well known from books for me to attempt description. It was far from my purpose, in writing about this country, to tread feebly in the footsteps of the many learned authors on it, but merely to give my impression of its present state as a part of the Turkish Empire. I cannot, however, pass over Jerusalem without saying how painful it was to me to listen to the desecrating tales of guides at the sacred shrines. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is necessarily of surpassing interest; but the doubt of the identity of the tomb—the flight of steps leading from it to

Calvary, which is also in the church, and the monkish triviality with which every detail is pointed out—the sockets of the three crosses—the rock riven by the earthquake during the crucifixion—the stone on which the Lord's body was prepared for burial—that on which the Empress Helen sat when she found the true cross—finishing off with the sword of Godfrey of Bouillon—and all this seen under a guard of Turkish policemen—drive reverence from the mind most bent on simply believing that Christ died there. On Easter-eve it is still worse, I am told. The Greeks and Armenians assert that fire descends miraculously from heaven to light the lustres and tapers round the Holy Sepulchre, as the altar was burnt at the prayer of Elijah in the First Book of Kings. Strange antics are then performed, ludicrous were they not profane. People rush wildly shouting round the tomb; and so mad is the frenzy excited, that persons have even recently been trampled to death in these superstitious orgies when the struggle to light tapers at the holy flame is raging. Formerly a white pigeon was thrown from the cupola into the sanctuary, to represent the descent of the Holy Ghost; but this gross aggravation is happily now discontinued. And we expect Christianity to be respected by Mussulmans who witness such degrading mummeries; for there are always some Turks in the church to guard it, and on great festivals there are large bodies of soldiers and police, to tell the tale of Christian inferiority to the purity of their own form of worship and that of the Jews. The noble Mosque of Omar is very different in

its general effect. Impressed by its grave repose, one rejoices to recognise the undoubted features of the threshing-floor of Araunah, a bare rock unadorned with priestly gewgaws, and precisely in the same state in which it was when Abraham bound Isaac on the altar he had erected on it—when Melchizedek or Shem (if they were really the same person) offered bread and wine to Abraham on it, receiving a tithe of his spoil—when the angel stood there to threaten Jerusalem with pestilence, and when David built his altar on it. Then this was the court of the Temple of Solomon, whose vaulted foundations I visited, while pilgrim Jews from Germany and Poland wept outside, in all simple grief for its fall, at the Place of Wailing. It is truly a grand monument, eclipsing, both as a Jewish temple and as a mosque of Islam, the tawdry finery of the Christian Church of the Holy Sepulchre. One can well comprehend the enthusiasm of Saladin when he said, as recorded by the historian Emad ed Din, that it was the abode of a prophet, the resting-place of saints, the goal of pilgrimage of angels, the future scene of the general resurrection and judgment, the spotless and beautiful pavement whence Mahomet ascended to heaven, and whence the lightning flashed on that night of mystery, illuminating every point of the universe.

One cannot stay a day at Jerusalem without hearing more than one cares to hear of the squabbles of the rival churches. They are, it is true, paltry and spiteful, but, under them, political interests move the world. Never were such important results so little

understood in their primary causes and pretexts. People say that questions of church keys are unworthy of serious notice: they would be so, were they not fraught with consequences whose gravity cannot easily be estimated in more enlightened and rational countries. In Turkey, preponderance of influence confers material as well as political advantages on the foreign power possessing it. Foreign influence in Turkey rests chiefly on questions of religion. Creed and nationality are here convertible terms. A native is asked if he is an Arab, and replies that he is a Latin or a Greek. Though of the Armenian nation, he will call himself a Catholic, not an Armenian, if he belong to the sect acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope. Jerusalem is the first battle-field, Constantinople being the second, of religious rivalries, which take the place, and play the part, of the patriotic nationalities of Europe. The Greek and Romish Churches, cheered on by the voice of temporal policy, and marshalled under their respective patrons, Russia and France, fight out their unholy struggle for the mastery on this holy ground: when victory is declared on one side or the other, the case goes to Constantinople, and may culminate in a European war. England has a church and a bishop at Jerusalem; but mark the difference: they preach only on the subject of religion, supply the population with translated Scriptures, and found schools for the education of their children. To England the question, whether the right of Rome and France to the keys of the Holy Sepulchre confided to Charlemagne as the

champion of Catholicism, or that of Constantinople and Russia by the confirmation of Khalif Omar, is the more valid right, is interesting only in the consequences of the controversy. England does not seek to obtain in the East that species of influence on which some other countries found their hopes of advantage, if evil befall the Turks. She requires only to watch and to understand the various phases of the controversy, in order that she may not be taken by surprise when it produces great practical results. The position of England as the first of liberal and commercial states suffices her, and she will probably find, as such, more sympathy in an Eastern crisis than those who build upon the sand of time-serving priestly attachment.

When the seat of the Roman Empire was transferred to Byzantium, a political rivalry arose between the two capitals; both fell, and their rivalry became ecclesiastical instead of political. Photius, in his ambition to become a Byzantine pope, laid the train of scandals in Christendom. Certain savages, meanwhile, appeared in the Bosphorus, paddling canoes of hollowed trees, clothed in the skins of wild beasts, and worshipping cruel gods to whom they offered human sacrifices. Some of these barbarians, prostrate before Byzantine civilisation, became converts to Christianity, and, returning to their northern steppes, were accompanied by a Greek priest. Russia, in her infancy, thus received the so-called Orthodox Christian Faith! When her full growth was attained, and the rude vigour of her age as a state gave her the strength

inherent in that period of national life, she turned to her parent Church, now decrepid in its senility, and gave it protection and support.

When two centuries of distant warfare had worn out the crusading spirit, there remained open to European pilgrims at Jerusalem only the hospitals of St. John and St. Lazarus. After the withdrawal of the knights in charge of these receptacles of foreign Christians to Rhodes, and thence to Malta, the Minor friars, imitating their founder, St. Francis of Assisi, who had braved the Soldan Malek Kamel at Damietta, raised a monastery at Jerusalem for the protection of pious strangers visiting the tomb of Jesus. The Franciscans thus became the representatives of Catholicism in Syria, and, being chiefly French, the protection of that denomination devolved on France.

Officially, the protectorate of France first appeared in the treaty concluded between Francis I. and the great Sultan Suleyman II. That of Russia commenced a century and a half later, when the Czar Fedor III. made peace with the Turks after driving them from the banks of the Dniester, and opening the Black Sea to his incipient trade. With how much courtesy and moderation France has exercised this function may be inferred from the facts that one of her ambassadors, M. de Marcheville, was sent out of the country, and a native dragoman of her embassy was impaled, by Sultan Amurath IV., for their imperious insistance. The arrogance of Russia did not appear on the political stage of the East before the decline of the Ottoman

power. The treaty of Carlowicz first announced that the period of Turkish conquest was at an end; that of Passarowicz confirmed the fact. The military successes of John Sobieski, the Duke of Lorraine, and Prince Eugene, were followed up by the exploits of Romanoff and Suwarrow in the reign of Catherine II. The treaty of Kainarjik was imposed by Russia. Then came the wars of the present century: under Kaminski and Kutusow, terminating in the treaty of Bucharest; with the Emperor Nicholas in person, and Diebitsch, resulting in the treaty of Adrianople; and, finally, the officious aid given to the Sultan against the Pasha of Egypt, producing the treaty of Hunkiar Skelessi; all of which treaties struck repeated blows at the root of the Turkish domination, and called into progressive existence the disaffection and ambition of the Greek Church in Turkey. Encouraged by unvarying good fortune, the Emperor Nicholas sent Prince Mentschicoff to clinch the nail now driven home, but a new antagonist took the field. As Russia was the champion of the Greek Church, so was France of Roman Catholicism in the East. England was dragged into the quarrel. Russia, in her turn, saw her career of conquest closed—for a time. The last phasis of the religious controversy commenced at Jerusalem, ripened into war at Constantinople, and was concluded at Sebastopol.

This controversy forms the staple of the archives of the French and Russian embassies at the Porte. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built by the Greek Empress Helen; the Saracens took it from the Greeks;

the crusaders from the Saracens; and the Saracens from the crusaders, to yield it to the Turks. The Chapel of the Grotto of the Nativity, and the Church of Bethlehem, also owe their origin to the piety of Helen; the crusaders repaired them; and it was in the latter church that King Baldwin was crowned. The Russo-Greek claim rests on the original erection of the buildings, and on the recognition of both the Saracens and the Turks; the Franco-Roman claim is founded on the period of occupation by the crusaders. When Jerusalem fell into the hands of Saladin, it was seriously contemplated to annihilate its attraction to foreigners by destroying the churches and ploughing up their sites. Had the purpose been carried out, real religion would have lost nothing, and the lever now moved by the enemies of Turkey would have had to seek another fulcrum. In 1808 the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was destroyed by fire: it was said that the tombs of Godfrey and Baldwin, under the rock of Calvary, had been rifled, and the heroic dust of the great crusading and Roman Catholic kings thrown to the winds, by malignant Greeks. When the Bourbons returned to Paris, they revived the French protectorate at Jerusalem, abandoned by the impiety of the great revolution, and endeavoured to come to an amicable arrangement with Russia. Baron Strogonoff and the Marquis de la Rivière, the respective plenipotentiaries, were on the point of concluding it when the ebullition of Greek ambition in 1821 broke off the negotiations, which were never resumed. The Roman Catholics have ever

since been reduced to the possession of two small chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, of which they had previously held the whole. They have had to suffer many most indecorous insults on the part of the Greeks—such as the cutting of ropes by which lustres were suspended over the heads of priests while officiating, and the like. On Good Friday, in the year 1846, a carpet of the Greeks was moved by the Latins during mass; an unseemly altercation ensued, and a quarrel in which blood was shed before the very altar. In 1847, a silver star inlaid in a marble slab of the Chapel of the Nativity, was cut out and carried off by the Greeks, to resent the alleged insult conveyed by an inscription stating that it belonged to the Latins. A firman, ordering that it should be restored, was obtained from the Porte after a year of negotiation on the part of the papist embassies at Constantinople; but it was not put into execution. The dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is now the bone of contention. Each sect having hitherto prevented the other from keeping it in repair, the whole of one side has fallen in, and the sacred tomb is open to wind and rain. The Sultan should himself repair it, and thus cut the Gordian knot which priestcraft and diplomacy have so elaborately tied.

LETTER XVI.

Jacob's Well—Shechem—Plain of Esdraelon—Nazareth—Acre—Russian Steamers—Scala Tyriorum—Tyre—The Leontes—Sarepta—Sidon—Said Bey Jumblat—Fakir ed Din's Cave—Lady Hester Stanhope's Grave—Tomb of Jonah—Beyrout—Politics of Mount Lebanon.

Beyrout: February 24, 1860.

WE have come here by land. From Jerusalem we went to Nabloos by Gibeah, Bethel, and Shiloh, passing a night at the romantic village of Ain Yebrood. Of all these localities renowned in ancient Jewish history, the most interesting is the scene of Jonathan's daring exploit against the Philistines, which minutely corresponds with the description in the First Book of Samuel. The country around is rocky and barren. Here no Bedaween molest the villagers, and, in spite of the difficulty of making the little soil there is productive, an air of well-being exists which one rarely sees in Syria. The notables of the towns, and the tax-gatherers, do not find enough to tempt their cupidity, and the other great drain on cultivation does not exist. Jacob's Well is a complete illusion. I expected more from it than from any other of the sacred sites, and hoped to find it such as would fill up the picture drawn by imagination of our Saviour conversing with the astonished woman of Samaria. But buildings

had been subsequently erected over it; they have fallen, and no trace of a well remains. Shechem, with its double rampart, Ebal and Gerizim, surpassed my ideal of its beautiful situation in a well-wooded and watered valley of gardens. We were received in the house of the chief priest of the Samaritans, who told us that there were now only a hundred and fifty persons of his ancient faith in the world. This town, on the whole, has a charm not often met with in this country, the houses being well-built, the streets shady, and the population thriving. A Protestant community has been formed under the auspices of our distinguished Bishop of Jerusalem, and a school opened. The teacher, a very intelligent young man, brought up by the establishment at Jerusalem, spoke hopefully of missionary labour at Shechem. On leaving it, we had first an agreeable hour's ride along its lovely vale; then rugged hills to cross in a northerly direction; and another long valley with several large villages on its steep sides to follow past Dothan, where Joseph was feeding his father's flocks when his brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites on their way from Gilead to Egypt. There were two places recommended for our halt, Jenneen and Birkeen. The latter was a few miles farther on our way, but then we should enjoy the comfort of a better house, that of a worthy Greek priest. On this information we decided to go there. The few additional miles let us in for a thorough drenching, as the rain soon fell in torrents; and we passed the most wretched night we had yet encountered in the cold

dirty hovel of the priest; while our Turkish captain, who, not being with us when we left the straight road, had gone to Jenneen, told us afterwards that he had prepared an excellent Turkish house for our reception. Our adviser, like all Christians in the East, had considered the hospitality of a Mussulman more to be avoided than any other evil. We took about six hours to ride across the great plain of Esdraelon, which presents the usual spectacle of unemployed fertility. The depredations of the nomadic Arabs are there altogether without a check, and they may be said to be perfectly successful in their system of preventing cultivation in order to enjoy pasture. A branch of the Hanadi tribe is stationed at the north end of the plain under a sheikh of the name of Akil, but he seems, like his kindred near Aleppo, to be on too good terms with the Anezi to be of any use to the government which pays him to oppose them. The tribe commanding that part of the country is called Ben-i-Sachar, which name struck me as sounding very like Ben Issachar; and, the territory of Issachar having been there, the association may not be altogether fanciful. I do not know if the lost tribes of Israel have ever been looked for in the Syrian desert. The Bedaween often show decidedly Jewish features, and I see no reason why some of the Israelites should not have become nomadic, their Hebrew tongue merging in its kindred Arabic. All the Jews of Syria, moreover, speak Arabic amongst themselves; and only their learned men know Hebrew as a dead language. Advancing over the field of battle where the French

under Kleber, though victorious, thought it wise to withdraw from a contest with the Arabs, we approached the hills of Nazareth, with Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel on our right and left. A long and winding ascent with a sudden turn to the east brought us into the secluded valley in which Jesus passed his childhood and youth.

It seemed congenial to find the home of Mary in a quiet little town, uninfested by professional showmen. At Jerusalem sacred localities are paraded in crowded streets by cicerones paid by the job, who hound one on from tomb to shrine, from the shop of the Wandering Jew, who told our Saviour to walk when staggering under the cross in the street now called Via Dolorosa, to the door of the house whence Veronica came to wipe his brows, and the mark on the stone produced by the fall of the cross when Simon the Cyrenian was made to bear it, with a degree of technical skill and bustle that jars on the impressions derived from the real scene of his sufferings. Repose is the predominant character of Nazareth. Shut out from the world by a girdle of hills encircling its narrow plain, it lies concealed with an air of that humility which Christ preached and practised on earth. There are no thronged hotels, no busy Frank shops—nothing but the homely simplicity it presented twenty centuries ago. A Franciscan convent guards the chapel built over what was supposed to be the house of Joseph and Mary; and the kind monks receive travellers in a separate suite of rooms on condition of each not taxing their hospitality for

more than three days. We should probably not have stayed more than a night, had not heavy rain kept us there the full allotted time. On the fourth morning the dark clouds cleared away, and a bright sun invited us to resume our saddles. The fine air, redolent with the fragrance of mountain shrubs, our path meandering from dale to dale, over rounded undulations clothed with coppice, and winding gradually down deep ravines overhung by noble timber, made our journey more like a forenoon excursion than the serious task of getting to our next halting-place. Passing the large village of Shefa 'Amar, with its Saracenic castle, ruined church, and picturesque woods, we descended in the afternoon to the plain of Acre. Still the same indications of misgovernment greet the traveller's eye as elsewhere in Syria; the elements of agricultural prosperity, fine land and an industrious population, are not deficient, but the want of protection and encouragement prevents their being turned to account. In other countries, the tax-payer gets something for his money; here the government collects taxes, and does nothing in return for them. No hope is entertained by the peasantry of assistance against the Bedaween; and they are forced by the exactions of the collectors to borrow at a ruinous rate of interest. The maintenance of their families requires that the threshing of their corn should not be delayed; permission can only be obtained on the condition of twenty or thirty per cent. being given up instead of the tithe. Very little thus remains to the cultivator beyond what is necessary for his support,

and he ceases to sow a greater quantity of seed than will suffice to produce it. One consequently sees on the noble plain of Acre, as in most other parts of the country, a rich black loam extending as far as the eye can reach, and yielding, with the exception of a few patches of cultivation, only a heavy crop of docks and thistles. Around the scanty villages, stout oxen graze in happy inactivity, and within them sturdy boors lounge about with the utmost indifference to the value of time, labour, and opportunities.

A long ride on the hard sand stretching round the bay between Mount Carmel and Acre, and through a grove of date-trees gracefully waving their feathery boughs to the sea-breeze, with a wilderness of reedy downs on our right, the reputed haunt of prowling robbers, and the surf rolling over many black wrecks of coasting vessels on our left, driven by westerly gales on that dangerous shore, and now half buried in the shingle, concluded our day's journey. We forded the Belus—to whose vitreous sand Pliny attributes the invention of glass by some sailors who cooked their dinner on it—and reached the single gate of Acca, the Accho of the Book of Judges, the Ptolemais of Ptolemy Soter, and the St. Jean d'Acre of the crusaders, as the sun was gliding below the western horizon in a yellow blaze of sea and sky. Acre is still a mere military post, as it has been during the whole of its eventful history. Taken by the crusaders, and from them again by its former Saracen holders, it was finally surrendered by the Knights of St. John, who thence went to Rhodes,

and subsequently became the Knights of Malta, closing thus the strange career of the Franks in the Levant. Sultan Selim I. took Acre with the rest of Syria, and it became a seat of successive Turkish governors. In the middle of the last century an Arab sheikh called Daher suddenly entered the town at the head of his Bedaween, and gained possession of it. He improved it in every way, and the Porte thought it better to let him keep it, and confirm his successor in the post of governor. This was Jezzar Pasha, so notorious for his cruelty, and known even in Europe for having joined Sir Sidney Smith and made a gallant defence against the attack of Buonaparte. Abdulla, the next Pasha of Acre, was one of the semi-independent satraps who weakened Turkey so much during the reign of Sultan Mahmoud, and from whom Acre was wrested by the Pasha of Egypt. To restore it to the Sultan, England was obliged to bombard the town; Admiral Stopford avenging thus Richard Cœur de Lion. Since then it has been used by the Turks as a garrison town to keep their state prisoners in. These are to be seen in the streets by hundreds, many of them with chains from the ankles to the waist. Acre has, therefore, never had any existence otherwise than as a stronghold. Trade cannot live without a harbour, and productive prosperity is not the privilege of any Turkish town. The population, amounting to ten or eleven thousand, is steeped in abject poverty, dependent for a livelihood on what is expended for and by the garrison and prisoners, while a rigid military rule prevails in

every particular of its condition. When walking next morning on the flat roof of the house we occupied, I saw a large steamer approach. It passed, as the want of a port prevents Acre from deriving even the advantage of being included in any of the lines of steam navigation along the Syrian coast. She showed her colours to the Turkish flag on the fort: they were Russian. The treaty of Paris reduced the Black Sea squadron within narrower limits than were agreeable to Russia or consistent with her policy: immediately a numerous fleet of fine steamers, manned and officered by the imperial navy, commenced running round the Black Sea and down the coast of the Levant. They belong to a commercial company, but the returns do not come near the outlay. The steamers touch at the several ports to keep up appearances, leaving an easy competition for cargo and passengers to bonâ-fide companies; and the line is continued in spite of all losses. Russia has never yet been known to abandon views which have become a part of her history, or to overlook any detail which to her long-sighted vigilance appears capable of contributing, be it ever so little, towards the success of those views. The theory that the results of the Crimean war, and of the change of reign, have altered the policy of Russia, may be plausible; but, to my mind, it wants the only thing that could give it weight, which is truth.

After starting from Acre on our northward course, we left on our right the palace of Behajeh, with its extensive garden and plantations, the work of Abdulla

Pasha, and recently purchased for only four hundred pounds by a Christian of the town. Our road lay along the plain, not without cultivation as the mountains close in on the shore, and agreeably diversified with occasional orange groves and orchards of apricot and plum trees. At noon we wound along the Scala Tyriorum, a path of a mile in length cut in the face of a cliff whose base is in the sea two hundred feet below. A precipitous mountain rises above it, ending in a bluff headland called Promontorium Album by ancient geographers, from its composition of indurated marl veined with flint. It seems to have been the only pass known in history, and must therefore have been trodden by Israelites, Assyrians, and Macedonians; but to which of these conquering hosts it owes its origin does not appear to have yet been ascertained. There is an inscription on a rock beneath the path, which is said to be in an unknown language; but it is so difficult of access that no one has been able to examine it and discover what light it may throw on the work. Towards evening we came to Ras el Ain, a copious spring, turning some mills, finely situated near the shore, where European-looking houses had recently been erected by the late Grand Vizier, Reshid Pasha, for the purpose of establishing a colony. He had bought a considerable tract of arable land on the plain extending to the mountains behind it, and sent a Polish refugee to take charge of his property; but the unhealthiness of the climate frustrated the scheme, and, like everything of this kind in Turkey, it was soon

abandoned. The doors and window-shutters of the deserted buildings now flap mournfully in the wind. At a late hour we arrived at the remains of Tyre, and followed the sand-covered causeway built during the Macedonian siege of the insular part of the ancient city. Either ancient history is full of Oriental hyperbole, or modern ideas are greater than ancient facts; for one is generally doomed to disappointment on the sites of past renown. What Joshua called a strong city—what baffled for thirteen years the power of Nebuchadnezzar, and so long resisted the vigorous attack of Alexander the Great—could at best have been but a moderate fortress. That the merchants trading there were princes and the honourable of the earth, as Isaiah records, is quite intelligible, as the commerce of those days would amply find its requirements in the small port and open road to the east; and the abundance of the peculiar shell-fish producing the Tyrian purple still shows how prosperous may have been that local industry. But one looks around in vain for the natural advantages which are said to have favoured the great Phœnician capital—for the elements of that military supremacy described by Ezekiel, the ramparts manned by Arvad, the Gammadims in the towers, and their shields hung on the walls round about. The fallen city of Tyre has now a population of barely four thousand, nearly equally divided between Christians and Mussulmans. The former belong almost exclusively to the sect of Greek Catholics, and have a bishop resident amongst them. The port, though small and

choked with sand, is safe, and encourages the inhabitants to devote themselves to the coasting trade and to fishing. They also export tobacco, grown on the mountains, to Egypt. But there is no life in the place; and it must gradually become a mere village, if inhabited at all.

A good night's rest—no slight benefit to one riding daily through an ague fit—enabled us to take an early departure on our way; having first walked awhile about the ruins of the vast cathedral, best known by the consecration-speech of Eusebius, of which the historian of the Crusades, William of Tyre, was officiating bishop. We crossed the Leontes, second in Syria to the Orontes, by a bold arch of no great antiquity. These two rivers rise not far from each other in the valley of Cœle-Syria, between Lebanon and Hermon—the one flowing northwards to Hama, Antioch, and Seleucia; the other southwards, to water the plain between Tyre and Sidon, before falling into the sea. We passed the ruins of Zarephath or Sarepta, which, judged by their extent, must have been a considerable city. No building now remains above the ground, and the foundations are being dug out and shipped for Beyrout, whose best quarry is there. A cave is shown by travelling dragomans as the abode of Elijah—apocryphal of course, for the widow is expressly stated to have given the prophet a loft or upper chamber in her house. The rest of our day was spent on the great Phœnician plain, now scarcely cultivated; and in the evening we entered the gate of the Phœnician capital. Sidon lay

smiling beneath the setting sun, with foaming breakers, driven in from the west, falling in wild gambols at the feet of bright green tamarisks. Noah's great-grandson, who gave his name to the future city, charmed with the fairness of the spot, pitched his tent on the height now occupied by the castle, according to a tradition not yet forgotten. There he formed his plan of building arks on the flood that stretched away before him to the distant horizon. Soon his city became the metropolis of the young world's trade. Long lines of laden camels wound down the hills from the interior, and white sails were spread to the breeze, wafting the produce of the far East to Western shores. But the Assyrian, the Greek, the Roman, and, more than all, the Turk, have dragged Sidon down to that low level of small provincial towns where we now found it. The crusaders tried to raise it again to importance, when King Baldwin took the town and gave it as a fief to the French knight Eustace Grenier; but they were unable to hold it long, and it was retaken by Saladin after the battle of Hattin had sealed the fate of the Franks in Syria. The Templars purchased Sidon, but were soon obliged to retire to Tortosa, and finally to Cyprus. The town now contains many good houses. The inhabitants are about seven thousand in number, of whom two-thirds are Moslem, and one-third Greek Catholics and Maronites in nearly equal proportions. The port was once capable of sheltering fifty vessels, but it was blocked up with stones by Fakir ed Din, the Druze usurper of the government in the beginning of the

seventeenth century, to defend himself against the Turks, and it can now be entered only by boats. The chief trade of Sidon is the exportation of raw silk; mulberry-trees being extensively cultivated in the gardens which occupy the whole space between the town and the hills. Fruit of different kinds, reputed the finest in Syria, is also shipped in great quantities.

We left Sidon on a lovely morning; and a most charming ride we had with two much-esteemed American missionaries through the fresh luxuriant vegetation of those gardens, orchards, and orange-groves. Emerging from them, we suddenly found ourselves surrounded by a troop of armed horsemen, while a pale-faced, intelligent-looking young man, in a Turkish frock-coat, rose from a carpet spread under a large tree, and advanced towards us. He was accompanied by an exceedingly stout person in the Egyptian jacket and bags. Recognition was not slow, and we sat down with the great Druze chief, Said Bey Jumblat, and his kehaia or lieutenant. He had inherited from his father, Beshir Jumblat, who was strangled by Abdulla Pasha of Acre, a whole district of the mountains above us, and he was now visiting a part of his property. Half an hour's conversation over pipes and coffee, with frequently-recurring professions of attachment to England, having disposed of this incident, we mounted again and rode to the banks of the river Oweli, formerly Bostrenus, which we crossed by an excellent bridge of a single arch erected by Fakir ed Din. A more ancient one had probably preceded it, for the Phœnician level was

discernible on some of the blocks of stone irregularly built into the buttresses. This limpid stream descends from the mountain by a gorge of the greatest beauty, passing below Mukhtara, where the Jumblat family has a picturesque residence almost deserving the name of a palace, and plunging down a precipice of two hundred feet in a noble cascade, with pine-clad cliffs rising above it higher and higher till they tower aloft in the one grand summit of Lebanon. Beneath one of those rocky ramparts is a cave, in which the rebel Fakir ed Din held out against the Sultan's troops. They undermined it, and it was not until the sapper's chisel had pierced the carpet on which he sat, that the brave old Druze surrendered, and carried his head to the Seraglio Gate of Stambul. The path follows the coast for many miles. Indeed, it could hardly do otherwise without getting embarrassed amongst the hills which come down to the water's edge, deeply indented with ravines, the uneasy beds of stormy winter torrents. The remains of an ancient Roman road show that this must always have been the trunk line of Syrian trade. It is in some places cut out of the rock; none of the crust of pavement and macadamising, which I have seen well preserved elsewhere, having resisted the wear and tear of time, weather, and traffic. On one of the heights stand the ruins of Juni, the scene of Lady Hester Stanhope's eccentric retreat from the toil and turmoil of London life. The once brilliant niece of William Pitt lies there, without epitaph or head-stone, amid a wilderness of rubbish around. A singular

coincidence is recorded of her burial, which took place by torchlight and in silence, like that of her early love at Corunna, while Moore was the name of the only Englishman present—our Consul-General at Beyrout. We rested an hour at Nebbi Yunas, the Prophet Jonah —a delightful halt, with its cool fountain and shady trees, which few travellers despise, whether they believe or not that the prophet was there cast on shore by the whale, and that his remains still sleep in the mausoleum visited by pilgrims, chiefly Mahometan, who pray so devoutly at the shrine dedicated to his memory. A couple of hours' ride farther along the coast, winding round its little bays and creeks, on a bridle-path pushed almost into them by the hills whose feet they bathe, made us fain to rest again under the grateful shade of a solitary carub-tree that spread its gnarled boughs and dark glossy foliage over a rude pavement, evidently a pious foundation in favour of weary wayfarers. Quartidian ague is not the most agreeable of travelling companions, and I was beginning to feel how futile was my effort to ride away from it. On the contrary, its *atra cura* clung tighter *post equitem* as we advanced, and it was now becoming evident that it must soon succeed in unhorsing me altogether. But we were not far from Beyrout and assistance. Another hour and a half over heavy sand sufficed, and at nightfall, passing through the pinewood above the town, we dismounted at the door of an hotel, and I quickly put myself on the sick-list.

Thirty years ago Beyrout was a mere haven with a

few warehouses, for the trade of Damascus. Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt made it the capital of Syria, to spite the people of Sidon, where he had not been well received; and Damascus sank in proportion as Beyrout rose. It has now sixty thousand inhabitants, scarcely the half of whom are Moslem, the remainder being Europeans and native Christians. The winter here is milder than in any other part of Syria. There are occasional heavy rains, but one is never deprived of exercise by bad weather. Since I have got rid of my country fever, I ride or walk daily in terraced gardens, decked with villas of the wealthy merchants, and showing here and there broken columns and fallen architraves, dating from the reign of Augustus when Berytus became a Roman colony, or from the time of Agrippa, who adorned it with those theatres in which Titus, rejoicing over the destruction of Jerusalem, sacrificed so many Jewish prisoners by making them fight with wild beasts. Built into the quays, and lying in the sea near them, are numerous fragments of sculptured granite, both grey and red, giving evidence of more remote antiquity—possibly vestiges of the Phœnician worshippers of Baal Berith mentioned in the Book of Judges. The casting up of sand from the sea by every gale, and the washing down of soil from the mountains, have formed a plain whose south-eastern side rises to their lower slopes, while its northern and western limits sweep along the shore with the port and town imbedded in a clump of gardens, and meet in a rocky cape crowned by the Ras Beyrout hotel—in the

verandah of which I sit enjoying the lovely prospect as the sun rises over the rugged peaks of Lebanon. An old friend appears, well versed in all the intricacies of Druze and Maronite politics, and corroborates, in our conversation on the subject, all my foregone conclusions about these storms in a glass of water.

In a few words, the matter seems to stand thus:—A small portion of the Ottoman dominions, neither so powerful as the Danubian Principalities, nor so much detached from the empire as the island of Samos, was endowed with institutions which foster a spirit of independence without furthering the material well-being of its population, and encourage enmities amongst its inhabitants, as well as sedition towards their sovereign, rather than progress in the common path of improvement. The Druzes and Maronites are thus in a position at variance with all possibility of good government. They do not prosper. Some lay the blame on Turkish governors, some on foreign agents. Special causes are assigned for every new collision. I imagine the truth to lie chiefly in the conflict between their actual condition as a *quasi* state and the natural requirements of a province. The first leads them in one direction, the second in another. Their two phases of political existence clash, and the shock produces that confusion of duties and rights which so often calls in vain for a remedy. The only remedy applicable to the circumstances of the case, as I think, is the withdrawal of nominal advantages and the conferring of real ones. Their so-called immunities might be modified so as to

belong to the sects collectively instead of individually, with a better form of native participation in local government, not aristocratic as heretofore, but representative; while possible disorders, both internal and international, should be repressed by a strong hand more immediately over them, and more exclusively occupied by their affairs, than that of the Governor-General of Beyrout. Above all, no foreign agents should be accredited to that mountain authority, or allowed even to reside within his jurisdiction on the footing of an emissary, from any European government whatsoever.

The system of the Turks has generally been to make the most of dissensions, and to create two parties where none previously existed. They rarely depart from this immemorial policy of fomenting discord, pitting the different sects and creeds against each other, maintaining each contest as long as possible, and starting another when it is exhausted, on the *divide et impera* principle. Little could therefore be expected from the appointment of a Turkish governor of Lebanon. The Druzes are too subtle and designing, too methodically dishonest and unjust in their relations with both Turks and Christians, and too uneducated and unenlightened, to admit of a good governor being found amongst them. The native Christians are not in a state to offer any choice, on account of the influence exercised over them by foreign agents. The only eligible person, in my opinion, would therefore be a Christian, non-Roman Catholic—an Ottoman subject, and having enjoyed the advantages of European training.

The Roman Catholics and Maronites, with the sections of the Greek, Syrian, and Armenian Churches acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope, have completely eclipsed on Mount Lebanon the remaining portions of these latter communities which have fallen into comparative obscurity. The open protection given by France to all who look towards Rome has been mainly instrumental in producing this effect. Russia protects the small remnant of the Greek Church as co-religionist, and also the Armenians on the plea that their metropolitan see of Echmiazin is in Russia. The protection of Russia has somewhat differed of late from that of France, and from its own previous practice in its means of action. France is still overbearing and arrogant: Russia is no longer so much so. She gives now to her interference and encouragement the form of pecuniary grants attributed to private piety. No rivalry seems to be felt. Crimean recollections are apparently obliterated. Both would willingly hurt Turkey, if their actions furnish any key to their thoughts; but, while France retains her triumphant tone, Russia merely sulks: the one has long since thrown off the mask in Syria, the other wears it now for the first time. These may be reasons why Mount Lebanon might not be well governed by adherents of foreign powers, and especially of France; but I confess that it cannot enter my mind that the cabinets of great European states will ever derive any advantage for their own countries from petty endeavours to befriend insignificant sects inhabiting a few districts in Syria.

We have seen that an appeal to arms for the settlement of differences arising out of conflicting interests in Turkey was in no way influenced, during the whole course of the contest, by the self-interested sympathies of Oriental Churches. The Roman Catholics and the Greeks, when they had got France and Russia fairly embarked in a war, thought only of themselves, and, fawning on the Turks, left line-of-battle ships and bayonets to do all the work for them. Yet, notwithstanding that practical lesson afforded by interference resulting in that struggle of nations, and in spite of a treaty of peace establishing a contrary policy, still are the Roman Catholics and Maronites assiduously protected by France, and the Greeks and Armenians a Russian as ever.

LETTER XVII

Druze and Maronite War—Tahir Pasha—Massacres—General Kmeti — Northern Syria — Massacres — Riots — Mussulman Prophecy—Massacre at Damascus—Ahmed Pasha—Danger of Aleppo—Fuad Pasha.

Aleppo: July 20, 1860.

A MORE general conflict has taken place between the Druzes and Maronites of Mount Lebanon than has occurred for many years, and it has been followed by frightful disturbances at Damascus. It appears that a couple of hundred Maronites went in the beginning of last month to attack the Druzes in the village of Beit Mari. A stronger force of Druzes sallied forth from the neighbouring village of Abadieh, and completely routed the assailants. Ten other villages were destroyed that day by fire.

The disturbed state of some parts of European Turkey had unfortunately obliged the Porte to move thither most of the regular troops stationed in Syria, and the authorities had not a sufficient force at their disposal to put down at once this insurrection, which bears the character of an organised attempt to annihilate the Druzes. Strange reports are spread of the Maronite bishops having sent priests, and circulated written exhortations, to induce the people to rise. The Christians of Deir el Kamar were the next to attack the Druzes.

This is one of the largest and most important places on Mount Lebanon, having about ten thousand inhabitants, and being almost deserving of the rank of a capital town. The Druzes of Munassif routed the Christians of Deir el Kamar. In revenge the latter burnt some Druze houses in their town. Two small villages, Kafi Hamal and Kafi Katrei, occupied by Druzes alone, were assaulted, but the Maronites were finally repulsed at both. The Druzes then attacked Deir el Kamar. Twenty-five lives were lost on both sides in the previous fights, which were allowed to go on for several days without any interference on the part of the government, although some of the few troops they had were at Deir el Kamar itself.

Tahir Pasha, hearing of the attack commenced on that place, proceeded to Beteddin, the ruined palace of the Emir Beshir, which is within a short mile of Deir el Kamar. He proclaimed to the assailants and the assailed that he had come to restore order. They both replied that they would make peace without his troubling himself. A negotiation was accordingly brought to a favourable conclusion, and, believing all danger past, the Pasha returned to Beyrout. It was not so, however, and the worst was to come. After peace was ratified, and arms laid down, the Druzes entered Deir el Kamar with all outward appearance of pacific intentions. No sooner in the streets than they fell upon the Maronites, who took refuge in the quarters of the detachment of Turkish soldiers. There, by an act which has been called treachery, and which I believe

to have been mere stupidity on the part of the latter, the Druzes were allowed to massacre the Maronites without an effort being made to save them. At Hasbeya and Rasheya, two other considerable places of Mount Lebanon, events almost precisely similar took place. The three towns were destroyed by fire, after having been plundered. Zahleh, a large Christian village, was also attacked; but the defence was successful there, in so far as to save the greater part of the population, which escaped to the district of Kesrawan, near Tripoli, while their houses were being sacked and burnt. Six hundred Maronites were thus butchered at Deir el Kamar, and upwards of three thousand at Hasbeya, Rasheya, and Zahleh. About a thousand Druzes fell. The extraordinary conduct of the Turks can, I think, be explained only by the theory that the wily Druzes had convinced them of the Maronites being rebels against the Sultan, insurgents in the pay of a foreign power to overthrow his throne, and persuaded them to allow of a summary execution, which they undertook as faithful subjects of the Porte.

Great alarm was felt at Beyrout and Damascus. The arrival of Ismael Pasha, the brave and honest Hungarian General Kmeti, with troops which he marched at once to the mountain, and the appearance of British, French, and Russian ships of war on the coast, restored confidence for a time.

The Maronites were the aggressors, and in number they were as three to one. The Druzes were merciless when victorious; but the same may be said of the

Maronites when fortune favoured their arms on previous occasions, when they had not the merit of sparing women and children, as the Druzes did now, and do habitually.

At Aleppo, Druze and Maronite quarrels find little echo; but a question between Mussulman and Christian invariably arouses angry feelings on both sides. The massacre at Jedda, two years ago, was thus a source of more apprehension here than these more extensive murders on Mount Lebanon. Only nine years and a half have passed since the Christian quarter of Aleppo was sacked, and Christian blood was shed by the Mahometan population on the most trivial provocation. A Greek bishop had been unwisely ostentatious in his sacerdotal pomp and retinue. A gold-embroidered saddle-cloth on the episcopal mule was too much for Islam to bear. The military conscription, too, had exasperated the more turbulent class of the population, on which it was purposely made to fall. Worst of all, a rich Christian had dared to refuse a loan to a needy notable. The obnoxious bishop fled from Aleppo, disguised as a Turkish woman, when the disorders commenced; but another prelate, the Armenian bishop, was taken for him, and so ill-treated that he died of his wounds and his fright. The wealthy Christian merchant was killed, others followed, and for three weeks the work of pillage and destruction continued without any check on the part of the authorities. Several Hungarian officers were here as political refugees at the time, and amongst them the well-known

General Bem; they finally contrived to get the troops to move, and a battle was fought against the townspeople, who were dispersed, having a thousand killed. So severe a lesson has not been lost on Aleppo; and though frequent apprehensions have been entertained, and occasional riots have occurred, nothing of so serious a character has taken place since then. Two months ago danger seemed imminent, but passed off. A ruined building in the possession of an Austrian Jew was claimed by the Ullema as having once been a mosque. Evidence was taken by the Cadi. Old men swore that they had attended Mussulman worship in it when children. The Jew produced documents to show that his father and grandfather had lived in it before and during the period sworn to. All was of no avail; mosque it was, and should be again. On the award of the Cadi, the faithful commenced rebuilding the walls. The Jew, enraged, pulled them down in the night. Such a profanation of a holy place brought together an infuriated mob in the morning. Three thousand zealous Mahometans crowded the streets, calling loudly for revenge on the person who had ventured to insult Islam. One or two of the leading Mussulmans of the town, who considered themselves aggrieved in their private interests by the local authorities, had taken this opportunity of raising a feeling of hostility between the different classes of the population, as well as a seditious spirit against the government, which they accused of weakness and apathy in the cause of their religion. Firearms and ammunition were immediately

bought up wherever they could be found. Young men of all creeds and of bad character rushed about inciting those they met to fight and defend themselves. Some of the Mussulmans secretly announced to respectable European families, with whom they were on friendly terms, that a general massacre was going to ensue, advising them to take refuge in the towns on the coast, where they could be saved by the ships of war. Fortunately, a firm and intelligent officer was in command of the garrison—a Mussulman of Russia, who had left the Russian army before Kars, and offered his services to the Sultan in favour of his religion. The town was patrolled, the sale of arms prohibited, and some of the most dangerous persons arrested. This Pasha appeared alone in the streets, assuring the Mussulmans that they would get justice if they would only keep quiet. The Austrian agent was applied to, and he settled the question by exiling the offending Jew from Syria; which measure certainly saved the Jew's life, and possibly that of many others. A few days afterwards, without any very conspicuous motive, placards were posted on the doors of the mosques calling upon the Moslems to attack and exterminate the Christians. The garrison was kept under arms for several nights, and numerous patrols guarded the streets. The Christians concealed their valuables in cellars, or conveyed them to the houses of Mussulmans in whom they had confidence. The streets were deserted, and the shops closed. Amongst other incendiary statements in the placards, it was announced that last time was the turn

of the Moslems, and that now the Christians are preparing to rise against them; which is explained by certain rumours current of an insurrection of the Christians of European Turkey. About a week later, crowds of small traders and artisans, both Mussulman and Christian, assembled in the streets for the purpose of going in a body to the governor's residence to complain of a reduction of the currency now giving rise to much dissatisfaction in all classes, and to some suffering on the part of the poor. Suddenly a couple of hundred policemen appeared and began beating them indiscriminately. The tumult soon took the form of a conflict between Mahometans and Christians; and many of the latter were dragged to prison, kicked and cuffed by soldiers on the way. The governor shut himself up in his harem, alleging sickness. The members of the provincial council were in a panic, and nowhere to be found. Omar Pasha, the Russian, did his duty, and succeeded in preventing matters from going further. Nearly at the same time, some Mussulmans of Antioch made a strange religious demonstration by repeatedly entering the Christian churches during divine service, and uttering aloud Mahometan prayers with their backs turned to the altar. The Christian congregations had the forbearance on each occasion to take no notice of the offensive proceeding, and continue their own worship. Great uneasiness pervades all classes of the population. This has neither taken its rise in any definite cause for alarm, nor has it been evinced by violent outbreaks. Yet its existence is evident in a

general expectation of great events affecting the Turkish domination in Syria—in anxious enquiries about the disasters on Mount Lebanon—in muttered threats of one community against another, and in the stagnation of trade consequent on the winding-up of commercial affairs and departure from Syria of many respectable merchants, both native and foreign. This disordered state into which Syria has fallen recalls to the memory of the conservative Mussulmans a curious prophecy, generally though reluctantly believed. It was predicted in the beginning of the present century by a much-revered sheikh that, when the first of the sevens falls, the ruin of Islam will commence, and, when the second falls, it will have been completed. We are now in the year of the Hegira 1277; the year about to open will invert the first of the two Arabic sevens read from right to left—V becoming Λ; that is, 7 becoming 8; and in the year 1280 of the Hegira, the second 7 will also be inverted. This prophecy, supported as it is by the reality of the troubles now arising in various quarters, has naturally exercised a great influence on the fatalist tendencies of the Mussulmans, and increased their ill-will towards other sects. It is certain that feelings of animosity exist in a high degree on the part of the Moslems against European and native Christians on account of their superior commercial prosperity and growing ascendency; and on the part of the latter against the Mahometans—in general, for their unmistakable indications of hatred against the Turkish authorities,—in particular, for the

losses and insecurity arising from bad government. How readily that reciprocal animosity, harboured by the different sects, bursts forth when an opportunity offers, and foreign machinations are at work, is seen from year to year. The silly finery of a Greek bishop, with the refusal of a Christian to invest money in the hands of an embarrassed Moslem, produced the massacre of Aleppo in 1850; the shifting of a flag on board a coasting vessel which had changed owners, sufficed at Jedda; a dispute regarding a right of water in a garden, sent a raving rabble through the streets of Tripoli last year with shouts of 'Death to the Infidels! The time has come!' And it required all the prudence of a cool and energetic officer to prevent a claim for an old mosque, and a complaint against an alteration of the currency, from leading now to rapine and bloodshed. It is worthy of remark, that the endeavour to keep up this state of feeling comprises also the encouragement of rancour and aversion against the Turks on the part of Arab Mussulmans, who regard the former as degenerate sons of Islam. The Turkish regular troops, too, are despised in Syria as mongrel Franks. The garrisons are not strong enough to face these feelings on an emergency. Each Turk in the country would have thirty Syrians opposed to him were an insurrection to occur; and, to quell it, he would have to overpower an organisation and military efficiency little inferior to those of the Sultan's army; for the survivors of the Janissaries, who numbered no less than five-and-thirty thousand men affiliated at

Aleppo and Damascus when that force was suppressed in 1826, have kept up a species of secret union among themselves. They are all more or less inured to arms, young men recently affiliated, as well as old men belonging to the original corps. They look upon the Osmanli as a national enemy, and the persecutor of their banner; and they harbour hopes of a separation of Syria from the Ottoman Empire, by the formation of a new Arabian State under the sovereignty of the Shereef of Mecca.

Such was the temper of the people in this part of the country when the tragedies of Deir-el-Kamar, Hasbeya, Rasheya, and Zahleh, were repeated on a still larger and more horrible scale at Damascus; not by the Druzes alone, but, what makes it ominous to the whole empire, by the Mussulman population of the town. The origin of this appalling misfortune seems to have been an offence committed by a Christian in a Mahometan family. He was accused before the authorities, and put in prison to take his trial. Protection obtained his liberation without punishment. Several young Mussulmans entered the Christian quarter, and told those they met, with violent curses and threats, that they would take the administration of justice into their own hands. They also marked signs of the cross with chalk on the pavements, and trod on them with imprecations and vows of vengeance. Finally they tied small pieces of wood in the form of crosses round the necks and on the tails of street dogs. Being personally known, these Moslem lads were denounced to the

Governor-General of Damascus, still Ahmed Pasha, by a native Christian attached as dragoman to the Russian Consulate. The Pasha had them arrested, and, having been weak enough to consult the dragoman as to the punishment he should inflict, unfortunately adopted that person's suggestion that they should be made to sweep the streets of the Christian quarter in chains. The sight of such an indignity inflamed the pride of the people on both sides; the one enraged and humiliated, the other exulting and triumphant. Altercations took place in the streets between Mussulmans and Christians. An affray ensued, in which the prisoners were violently rescued from their guards, some Christian houses were set fire to, and thirty Christians and twenty Moslems were killed.

On the following day, Christian refugees from Hasbeya, Rasheya, and Zahleh, flocked into Damascus. They were followed by Druzes from Mount Lebanon, and met by Druzes from the Hauran, attracted to the mountain by the news of bloodshed, and the hope of plunder. Finding the Mussulmans of Damascus in a state of insurrection, both these bodies of Druzes cunningly joined them in order to make common cause with them in the event of the massacres on Lebanon being punished. The Christian quarter was assailed by thousands. The Russian Consulate was the first house destroyed; the consul sought safety in flight, under the disguise of a Turkish woman. The French Consulate was plundered, but not burnt. The Franciscan monks were almost all killed, as also the Rev. Mr. Graham, a

Missionary from Belfast. The French sisters of St. Joseph were saved by the Algerine Abd-el-Kader, who exerted himself nobly in behalf of the Christians. Many of the latter found an asylum at the British Consulate, which was respected, and in the houses of some of the respectable Moslem merchants. Several of the latter were murdered for their humanity. The massacre, pillage, and conflagration lasted three days. In all, twelve hundred and eighty Christians were killed. Many women, young girls, and little children were taken to the harems, and abominably ill-used. Ahmed Pasha sent some troops, under the command of two colonels, into the streets when the outbreak commenced. They soon applied to him for instructions, under the impossibility of keeping the peace without resorting to violence. He ordered them in writing to fire upon the people. One of the colonels, in command of the regulars, obeyed his order, and dispersed the mob; proving thus that the evil might have been checked. The other colonel, who had charge of the irregulars, was won over by a Mussulman sheikh, who adjured him, in the name of the Prophet and their common religion, to join them, and clear the holy city of Damascus from the defiling presence of infidels; he went over to the insurgents with his troops, who became the most sanguinary and cruelly licentious of the monsters who disgraced the name of man on those three awful days. Organised gangs rushed about the streets, with the butchers of the town behind them; they dragged the men from their houses, and handed them over to those execu-

tioners; few of the women survived their shame, or dared to make known that they were still alive when carried off by the spoilers; and the houses, many of which were richly furnished in the oriental style, were completely emptied, then set on fire. Ahmed Pasha, meanwhile, thought of nothing better to do than to assemble the provincial council; instead of taking his sword and all his troops to the streets, where he might have stemmed the torrent of destruction, or done his duty by dying in the attempt, he satisfied himself with a written statement, signed by all the members of the council, that nothing could be done. The court of his residence was filled with thousands of screaming women and children; and he had the merit, though somewhat negative, of closing the gates and protecting them from their pursuers. During the three days many Christians found refuge there; and their number having at last reached between seven and eight thousand, they suffered greatly from exposure to the midsummer sun, want of food, and insufficient covering at night. The mortality was thus considerable, especially amongst the children, in the palace-yard.

You may well suppose that the Mussulmans of Aleppo did not hear of these abominable crimes with indifference; and, had they been disposed to do so, the panic felt by the Christians of this town would have suggested an application of the circumstances to their own case. For several days the most wealthy and respected Christian merchants of the place were made to walk in the gutter when they met a Mussulman in the

streets; a conventional word was even adopted as an order to admit their inferiority in this way, and little boys called it out on sight of a Christian with unvarying success. Some Christians have been beaten, others only vituperated. Shop-keepers were obliged to give their wares without payment. False debts were claimed, and paid. Still the Christians offered no resistance, and those who endeavoured to foment quarrels and disturbances found all their attempts frustrated by patience and submission. Finally, as at Damascus, the street dogs appeared with wooden crosses tied round their necks. Affairs were becoming serious. The ordinary police was no longer considered sufficient to check the impending disorders. Perhaps no great confidence was felt in their zeal for the maintenance of tranquillity, and in their impartial spirit. When the military commandant was giving them instructions, and asking them what they would do if they saw a Mussulman and a Christian quarrelling, one of the policemen replied with the utmost simplicity, that he would take the Ghiaoor to prison, of course. A body of five hundred special constables was enrolled from amongst the better-disposed Mussulmans, those who had been more in contact with Europeans, and especially some who had served during the Crimean war in the pay of England. The general commanding the garrison is an excellent officer, and a brave sensible man, capable of understanding and of carrying out timely suggestions. The growing excitement was watched with vigilance; and, as soon as it was seen that active measures were

not only called for, but also were not to be feared as productive of a crisis, he sallied forth at the head of the few troops under his orders, patrolled the town incessantly for three days and nights, posted artillery where the principal streets crossed, arrested all turbulent characters, and in short so completely convinced the people that the authorities were not to be trifled with, that matters soon settled down to their usual state of tranquillity. He possesses what is notoriously wanting in Ahmed Pasha of Damascus, personal courage. The latter is a scientific officer, having studied at the military colleges of Berlin and Metz, reads much in German and French on the details of his profession, but he is naturally a timid man. I knew him on the Danube in the beginning of the last war, and every one admitted that his arrangements for the force under his command were perfect, but no one ever saw him voluntarily under fire. I do not doubt that he was well aware how he ought to act in the outbreak at Damascus, and that he would have been quite as successful as others have been at Aleppo, but he could not bring himself to face the danger of doing his duty. His nervousness, not to use stronger language when talking of an old soldier and a distinguished general (for the victory of the Turks over the Russians at Citate, in Wallachia, was entirely owing to his military skill), has long been known in the Turkish army.

All alarm has now been put an end to by the intelligence of the arrival of Fuad Pasha at Beyrout as the Sultan's plenipotentiary. He is not only an able

statesman, but also an expert general, and a man of courage and energy. The first time he was brought into public notice was during the difficulty between Turkey and Austria, with Russia as her ally, in the Hungarian war, when he was sent as ambassador to St. Petersburgh. This was an arduous mission; for the Porte had peremptorily refused to give up the Polish and Hungarian refugees on the equally peremptory demand of those two great powers, and yet it was urgently expedient for Turkey that amicable relations with them should be maintained. The credit of that noble display of respect for the laws of humanity and hospitality in saving the lives of many gallant but unfortunate men, who had thrown themselves on the honour of the Sultan, is due to our ambassador at the Porte during that and innumerable other emergencies, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who then added one to the various titles he has gained, by his lofty English principles of rectitude, to the grateful esteem of his country, in raising and upholding its name for a chivalrous sense of what is right and just in foreign lands. The Porte, after accepting his counsel and support, wished to prevent any disagreeable feeling from being left in the mind of the Emperor Nicholas by the adoption of Lord Stratford's views in the matter. This was more than any one could accomplish; and the proof of the rancour harboured for years in the imperial breast is the undeniable fact that, if the proximate cause of the Crimean war was the question of the holy places, its original and fundamental motive was the more remote refusal of the

Sultan to deliver over to ignominy and death his Polish guests. Fuad Pasha cannot, therefore, be said to have been perfectly successful in this mission, but he made himself known, and deserved to be highly commended, as he was, for his fidelity to his master, and for his spirit of independence before foreign arrogance. He accordingly returned to Constantinople a marked man; and, when Prince Mentshikoff was sent to pick a quarrel with Turkey, his first public demonstration was to insult Fuad Pasha, whom he found minister of foreign affairs, by refusing to treat him even with customary official courtesy. Fuad Pasha, though entitled to redress, preferred sacrificing his own feelings to augmenting the embarrassment of his government, and resigned his post. He was soon called upon, however, again to take an active part in public affairs, and was sent to the Greek frontier, at the time when an inconsiderate and unhandsome attempt was made by King Otho to extend his territory at the expense of the Sultan, in the hope that the latter was engaged in so great a war that he would not be able to undertake also a little one. Fuad Pasha found the Turkish and Greek troops fighting, with some appearance of success on the part of the latter, owing to grievous blunders committed by the Turkish commander. Though he had never served in the army, the Sultan's commissioner at once perceived where these errors lay, took command of the troops himself, outmanœuvred the Greeks, and finally defeated them most signally. The soldiers spontaneously insisted on his wearing the badge of the army on his fez, which

was confirmed by the Sultan, to whom he had rendered such good service on this occasion. Since then he has been employed as minister of foreign affairs, and on several important missions in Europe. I have known him personally for upwards of ten years, and, if any one can help Turkey out of her difficulties, I believe Fuad Pasha to be the man; for to undoubted patriotism and high-mindedness, he unites indomitable perseverance and an astonishing power of endurance under fatigue, both mental and bodily. A man of such transcendent natural abilities cannot but be great when he is also a very hard worker. Fuad Pasha's first act in Syria has been to issue a characteristic proclamation, sent here and to the other towns by express, in which he emphatically states that, if a single Mussulman should henceforth dare to injure or insult a Christian, the whole quarter of the city, in which the said Mussulman lives, will immediately be rased to the ground.

LETTER XVIII.

Execution of Ahmed Pasha—Punishments—Seditious Document —The International Commission—Military Conscription— Admission of Christians to Military and Civil Rank—Stagnation of Trade — Depression of Agriculture — Christian Women in the Desert — Wars of the Bedaween — A Fight — A Boar-hunt — A Swedish Camel-driver at Palmyra—A Turkish Governor of the Desert—A Caravan plundered by an Englishman—A Chase.

Andrene: October 27, 1860.

AHMED PASHA has been executed. He deserved his fate, not as having instigated or even connived at the crimes which have been committed, but as a soldier found wanting in the hour of danger. He died like a man. Until he was brought out to be shot, he was not aware that he had been condemned. On seeing troops paraded, he asked the officer sent for him if his suspicion was founded. The reply being that it was, he requested to be allowed time to say his prayers, which was granted. There was great difficulty in keeping the soldiers steady during his last prayer. They liked him, I believe. When he stood up, he said merely that the Sultan might dispose of his life, adding, 'May God not look at his shortcomings!' This expression has been interpreted as implying that the Sultan sacrificed him, after having wished him to act as he did. Nothing could be more unfair. The words

are a common Turkish idiom, equivalent merely to our 'God bless him.' In the same spirit it was asserted, first, that the government was screening Ahmed Pasha; next, that they were hurrying on his execution to forestall revelations; and finally, that he was not shot at all, another man having been put in his place. The fact is, that he was formally tried by court-martial, sentenced to death, and shot at once, that the effect of the example might not be destroyed by unnecessary delay. Khalid Pasha, who commanded the firing party, was obliged to exhort the men in strong terms to do their duty, which they did at last with evident reluctance; and poor Ahmed Pasha died without a struggle, no less than twenty-eight balls having hit him. He thus suffered himself that violent death which, only a few months previously, I remarked on his having inflicted on the Ansairi prisoners, and on the same spot. Three other officers were shot with him—the commandants at Hasbeya and Rasheya, and the colonel who joined the insurgents with his irregular troops in the Christian quarter of Damascus. The latter was the only one who showed any fear of death. He was convicted on the evidence of a French Consular officer with whom he had formerly been on friendly terms. This person, disguised as an Algerine, was with a party of Abd-el-Kader's people when they met the colonel, who recognised him, and called out to the rioters to put him to death, as he was a Frenchman; but the latter escaped to report the fact, and the colonel was executed. The commandant at Deir-el-Kamar was also condemned to

death; but he will not be executed till Tahir Pasha's trial is over, on which he is the principal witness. A hundred and seventeen officers and soldiers of the irregular troops, with the son of the president of the provincial council, and several civil servants of the government, have also been shot; while others guilty of infamy, as well as cruelty, to the number of sixty-six, among whom were three sons of the greatest notable of Damascus, were hanged. Two hundred and fifty of the insurgents have been sent to hard labour for life, and three hundred for twenty years. A very large sum of money is being levied from the Mussulmans and Druzes to indemnify the survivors of their victims' families. These vigorous measures, and especially the number of deaths by hanging, which is an unusual mode of execution in Turkey, have given to Fuad Pasha the nickname of the Father of the Rope, an honourable title under the circumstances.

A seditious document has recently been in circulation all over Syria. It purports to be an address from the Ullema of Damascus to those in the towns of Northern Syria; and it appears to me so significant that I shall give a sketch of its tenor. After commencing, as is customary, with prolix salutations, it goes on in this strain:—'You know that the Christians, from the beginning of the reign of Abd-ul-Mejid, have been quarrelling, and piercing, and destroying the law of Mahomet, and passing the limits and transgressing the obligations imposed on them of old from the time of the Imam Ali-el-Hattab. And now they struggle

violently with the Mussulmans, bringing a curse on them in the things which the rules of the just law and the Koran-el-Shereef forbid, and which hurt them in their religion, and subvert the duties laid upon them, all which the Christians should obey. They transgress the regulations by sitting in official places. The greatest and smallest among them mock the Mussulmans and treat them as equals. They know not that the Mussulmans are determined to uproot and destroy their whole race, and for the following legal reasons: 1st, The shedding of their blood, the violating of their honour, the destroying of their property, the burning of their churches, the knocking down of their houses, is lawful, because their capitation tax is remitted. 2nd, Many maxims in the books, Fetwa-el-Hindieh and Fetwa-el-Baharieh, state strongly that it is not proper for Mussulmans to allow the strength of the Christians, and that the weakness of the Christians is necessary to the Mussulmans by whatever means it be secured—such as the destruction of their crops and fruits, and the obstruction of their labour. 3rd, It is not right to honour the Christians. May God curse those who dress them in robes of honour! 4th, The nations of the infidels are one nation. In the sect of the Nakshbendi it is written, that a Christian in an honourable position must not exist. It is not proper that Christians should appear as witnesses against Mussulmans, but it is proper that Ansairi should appear as witnesses against Christians. We quote the saying of God: Be not cowards before the nation of infidels, but

throw amongst them enmity and hatred unto the day of judgment! Oh, nation of Islam, awake from your deep slumber! Come, now, let us exterminate the worshippers of the cross from the holy cities which they defile! And let not the name of Christian be again heard in them! From what we have learnt from great officials, the powers cannot engage in war, for they have been weakened by the war of the Crimea. This then is the time. Let us seize the opportunity to conquer the Christians, for the day of their destruction is at hand. If we leave them two years more, they will become stronger than we are, and will take our place and destroy our race. For these reasons we have begun now to show ourselves. We have made friends with the officials. We have learnt the disturbances which took place at Stamboul last year. The greatest part of the men of the government have agreed unanimously to destroy the Sultan and all the Christians on the face of the earth, for the reason that the Sultan is a man who turns aside from the law of Islam; he places images in his palace, and his own image is placed over his head. He hangs gifts from Christians round his neck with the sign of the Christians engraven on them. Things like these defile the course of Islam, and cause deviations from religion. Two years ago took place a secret consultation between the officials and the Ullema and the principal Mussulmans, when they all agreed to destroy the Sultan and all who adopt his cause; place his brother in his stead, whose opinions are the same as ours; bring back the

faith of Islam to what it formerly was; weaken the Christians as they were before; break their pride, and if possible drive them entirely away from these cities, for, if wars and battles arise against us, they will be a stumblingblock to us, and strengthen the Franks. And now the Christians are exciting the Europeans and intriguing against Islam, and especially on Mount Lebanon, where there are two hundred thousand men rebellious and known to be in every intrigue. No one can enter Syria without their help. How much more now that they are all in correspondence with the Franks, in order to help their retaining their hold on these cities; and, having verified this in every quarter, we consulted the officials and Ullema, in order to destroy all the Christians on the Mountain, at Damascus, and at Aleppo, and in the rest of Syria, by whatever means are possible. And thus we have acted on the Mountain, and have destroyed them, and dispersed them in every direction. And thus also at Damascus we have destroyed and dispersed them. And you also, if anything arise against them, do not help them, but turn your eyes away from them. Answer us, in order that we may continue to instruct you how to act. And peace be with you; from your brothers at Damascus.'

When this extraordinary paper first passed from hand to hand, it was believed to be genuine, and, as such, it might have done much harm, but soon the Ullema began to pick holes in it, and finally declared it spurious. Then arose the idea that it was a production of the native Christians, for the purpose of

inducing the European powers to take up their cause more warmly. But the native Christians had never been known to play so bold a game; and besides, internal evidence in its tone and purport was incompatible with that theory. Lastly, it has been decided, and on grounds apparently quite conclusive, that its composition is that of a European, a good but not a perfect Arabic scholar, such as are employed by foreign cabinets after years of study. The style is defective, and the orthography not always correct. The Imam Ali is mentioned without the necessary formula of 'Peace be to him!' which is always used when the names of the Prophet and first four Khalifs are introduced, whether orally or in writing. El Hattab, moreover, was not the patronymic of Ali, but of Omar, and such a blunder could never have been made by any one capable of writing at all in this country. The word 'kullian' occurs in the document several times, and its use is confined to colloquial style. The term 'mukaddassi' is applied to the holy cities of Islam, whereas it is the expression of the Christians in talking of their holy places; no Mussulman would condescend to use it, no native Christian would honour a Mussulman sanctuary so far as to give it that epithet. The word 'kown is employed for 'because' instead of the more appropriate 'lian.' The name Suria appears for Syria, which is thoroughly European, the local name being Arabistan. Not to tire you with verbal criticisms, which have been multiplied to satiety and complete conviction, I sum up with two remarks: the manner in

which historical events are recapitulated is concise, methodical, and didactic, three qualities found neither in Mussulman nor in native Christian writings; and, there are various parallel passages to verses of Scripture which would certainly not be known to Mussulmans, and very improbably to native Christians, even supposing them to be in the priesthood. Several suspicious-looking characters have lately appeared in some of the towns of Northern Syria, calling themselves foreign priests, but acting and dressing in exceedingly unclerical fashion. The document was circulated simultaneously in different places, and many copies of it seem to exist.

The institution of an international commission to take into consideration recent incidents and future prospects in Syria, is a measure which meets with universal assent and approbation. The system which had engendered the present state of Mount Lebanon, was the produce of a collective deliberation of the European powers; it is but fair that they should have an opportunity of verifying the result, and of revising their work at the same time, while it is also not unwise to keep Turkey up to the standard of her duty by the cooperation of foreign commissioners.

A great number of those implicated, but not seriously, in the massacre of Damascus have been drafted into the army. I am not sure that it is quite right thus to lower the tone of military service by making it a penalty; but it will certainly do the recruits a great deal of good to be subjected to discipline, and the army may not suffer by the admission of some such young men. The mili-

tary conscription is soon to be applied also to the remainder of Syria. The Christians have heard this with distaste. The recent demand for payment of the tax in lieu of military service was resisted by them on the plea that, so long as the Mahometan class was not required to furnish men, the Christians should not be called upon to contribute money. But fear seems to have disposed of that argument, and the tax would now be willingly paid without the enlistment of Mussulmans, which is dreaded as a motive for another outbreak. In some towns the Christians have offered to serve in the army rather than pay the tax. It appears to me that the proposal should be acceded to. If it is not made in earnest, there would be no further opposition to the assessment; if the Christians really wish to enter the military service, a great change might be produced in the political condition of the empire without ferment or conflict. Were the Sultan effectually to establish perfect and real equality in this particular, as well as in others nominally levelled, were religious creeds no longer to disqualify for military or civil rank, and were talent, integrity, and meritorious services alone to achieve promotion, one of two issues must be the result: either a new impulse would be given to the declining vigour of the state by the admission of Christian activity and intelligence into the conduct of public affairs, and by the healthy emulation it would give rise to on the part of the Turks; or the superiority of the former in mental endowments, and in the spirit of enterprise and improvement, would gradually eclipse those of the latter, and

change the dominant race without the occurrence of struggles and violent commotions to disturb the internal tranquillity of the empire and the peace of Europe. That a beneficial influence of Christian energy on public interests would be felt, is proved by the history of Turkey before the Greek revolution, when she was able to uphold her rights against the greatest powers, and when her alliance was sought by those who now impose conditions on her, be they palatable or not. At that time, the exclusive direction of her foreign affairs, as well as the administration of several of her finest provinces, was entrusted to Greeks. Those Greeks may be justly stigmatised for the faults then inherent in their precarious position, when cunning and duplicity were the only shield they could oppose to the sword hanging over their heads. But they made Turkey strong and respected, nevertheless; and they prepared her for a simultaneous progress with other nations, by the institution of schools and colleges for the education of her Christian subjects all over the land. That class of men, who might almost be called statesmen, is no longer to be found in the Ottoman Empire, having rallied round the nucleus of Greek nationality, but the race is the same, and a class of Christian functionaries, civil and military, might arise if the Porte allowed it as then, with the qualifications and without the defects of their predecessors. If, therefore, a larger share in the administration of the affairs of their country is ever to be conceded to the Sultan's Christian subjects, and one can hardly doubt that such

must eventually be the case, the present appears to be no unpropitious occasion for making an experiment by consenting to receive Christian recruits in the army on equal terms with Mussulman soldiers.

The towns are quiet, but the feeling of security has not been restored. Some of the wealthy Christian families are leaving Syria to settle definitively in Europe, apprehending that the catastrophe of Damascus may any day be renewed. Trade is in abeyance; the same motive effectually deterring merchants from embarking their capital in local speculations. All are, on the contrary, realising what money they can collect, and remitting it to their correspondents in Europe, who in their turn withdraw credits formerly opened for commercial operations in Syria. This state of matters is not only exceedingly injurious to the general prosperity of the country, but it also threatens with ruin all those who were trading on the capital of their consigners, and this is the usual manner in which the importation of manufactured goods is carried on. Endless difficulties arise in the settlement of accounts, lawsuits ensue, and unproductive ill-feeling takes the place of fruitful activity in business. The prospects of the upper classes are thus in the worst possible condition. The working portion of the population is not more favourably situated. Cultivators in this country are always to a certain extent dependent on trade. Small loans are required by them at seed time, and repaid after the harvest. The money not being forthcoming, the usual amount of cultivation is diminished, and next year's

crop will consequently be deficient. The peasants, straitened by the refusal of credit, and less occupied in the fields, fall into violent disputes among themselves for small payments; and trifling and unimportant though they may at first appear, they occasionally result in bloodshed and feuds of whole villages. Several instances of both kinds have occurred of late, which the very defective system of employing irregular troops for the preservation of order in the agricultural districts has been altogether unable to prevent. The corrupt practices, so ingrained in officials that they may almost be called a national institution in Turkey, find an ample scope in these embarrassments of both classes of the population, and ingeniously turn to profitable account every difference arising amongst the high as amongst the low.

It is said that several hundred Christian women and young girls disappeared from Damascus during the massacre. Some are in the harems of the townspeople, and have embraced Mahometanism to conciliate their captors, and obliterate all trace of their miserable fate. Others were carried out of the town by Koords and Arabs who had joined in the pillage. I had heard of a few of these poor creatures being in a camp of the Anezi, and thinking my intercourse with that tribe might perhaps enable me to do something towards rescuing them, I made preparations for the attempt, which were more necessary than usual; for I had been at the Weldi settlement, and found it difficult to pass amongst the tribes now engaged in a general war, originating in the

rivalry between Sheikh Jedaan and his uncle Sheikh Deham. They had fought several battles, in which the former had been victorious, when Deham at last crossed the Euphrates, and obtained assistance from the Shammar. Jedaan then made alliances with the Sebaa, Mowali, Lehep and other tribes, and pursued Deham into Mesopotamia. A great battle lasted several days, upwards of 12,000 men being engaged. Jedaan was totally defeated, and he recrossed the Euphrates in a wretched plight, having lost all the herds and flocks of his tribe, and even their tents. The Bedaween on this side of the river supplied him with provisions, mares, and spears; and sent a couple of thousand horsemen with him to try and recapture his sheep and camels. In this he partially succeeded, his next attack having a more favourable issue. All this warfare, so extensively carried on to the great detriment of the villages on the skirts of the desert, was mainly owing to the reprehensible conduct of the chief of irregulars, Haji Batran, who had used a golden key to open his prison door, and was again at large in the full exercise of his useless and pernicious functions, inciting tribe against tribe, and maintaining that state of perturbation which he thought necessary to his own interests. The result was a strange state of affairs. The Turkish authorities at Urfa took the part of Deham and the Shammar, and sent all their troops to protect them against the attack of Jedaan, while Haji Batran was giving all the influence of the government at Aleppo to the latter, and supporting him with the whole force of irregulars. This could

not, of course, continue under the eye of a man like Fuad Pasha; and Haji Batran was arrested, and conveyed under escort to Beyrout. When matters stood thus in the desert, I had gone with F—— to Aisheh, hoping to get some of the Ferdoon tribe, settled there, to accompany us to the Weldi camp. They would not listen to any proposal of the kind, and said all they could to dissuade us from attempting to pass between the tribes then daily skirmishing with each other. We stayed the night with the Ferdoon, undecided what course to pursue, unwilling to turn back, yet aware of the difficulty of going on. Next morning a heavy snow-storm suggested the possibility of getting through unnoticed. Still none of the Ferdoon would try it. Knowing the way perfectly, we left Aisheh without an escort, and having with us only a servant, a groom, and a lad. For several hours we rode safely under the thickly-falling snow, unable to see fifty yards around us, and consequently unseen from any greater distance. In the afternoon, the weather unfortunately cleared, and we came in sight of some horsemen towards the north, belonging to the Shammar Sheikh, Abd-ul-Kerim, with a few of the worst characters among the Ghess and other low tribes, which had taken the field for Deham, in all about sixty. Being only five, we could not think of simple resistance, but both F—— and I were well mounted, and we could try to avoid close quarters. The party opened as soon as they saw us, and we were soon nearly surrounded. Flight in a straight line was impossible. We had plenty of room,

however, as our enemy seemed to have recognised us, and evidently feared that we might have firearms. I told F—— on no account to use his revolver, as we must be finally overpowered, and by drawing blood we should only seal our own fate. After ineffectual attempts to force our way through their line, in one of which I got a spear-thrust through my Arab cloak, but without wounding me, we kept wheeling and dodging the attacks made on us within a circle of a few hundred yards. Our three men having inferior horses were soon taken, unhorsed, and stripped. Their cries seem to have been heard by another body of horsemen, which soon appeared rapidly approaching us from the south. Encouraged by the hope that they were friends, we continued galloping about with a decided advantage in the speed and condition of our horses; if they were enemies, we could only give ourselves up. F—— was struggling gallantly, striking out with his fists, like a schoolboy as he is, at four or five Arabs, who were trying to jostle him. At last they got him down, and then others tried to close on me. The shock of several horsemen who ran up against me at full speed without pointing their lances, brought my horse to the ground, and rough hands dragged me from the saddle before he could rise. I contrived to shake them off, and, giving up my horse, ran towards the other party of Bedaween who were coming on at their best pace. The first man who reached me was Khalifeh-el-Kir, of the Roos tribe of Anezi. He was a brother, and he shouted to those behind him who I

was. I sent Khalifeh to F——, who was still stoutly sparring at bay, his horse having been carried off. Not knowing Khalifeh, he thought him a new assailant, and struck out at him too. Khalifeh quickly scattered with his lance the Shammar on foot around F——, unwound the aghal from his head, threw it over F—— to secure him, then gave him a horse to ride, taken from one of his men. The next who came up to me was Ahmed-Bey-Mowali, who at once charged those near me, and drove them off with the enormous lance he always uses. The fear of his very name seemed to disperse the Shammar. He gave me the mare of his cousin Daher, who was with him; and a general assault was made on the enemy. The Anezi and Mowali were only thirty, but they soon showed their superiority over the Shammar, who were as two to one. A short *mêlée* settled the affair, leaving twelve wounded, two of them severely. One of the latter was on my horse, and he was set upon ferociously, and knocked off with three bad spear-wounds and a broken head from the blow of a mace, which Ahmed Bey carries at his saddle-bow. In the evening the wounded were carried into the Weldi camp, where every attention was paid them; the Shammar and Ghess having galloped off without bestowing a thought on them. All our horses, cloaks, and everything we had lost, not excepting the minutest articles taken from our servants, were carefully brought to us by Ahmed Bey, who then led the way to Mehemed-al-Ganim's camp, a short mile further on. News of the fight had preceded us, and the whole

tribe came out on foot to meet us; the sheikh with bare head and feet, and tearing his beard with vexation; the women brandishing tent-poles, and screaming imprecations against the Shammar. It was not until F—— and I were felt all over by the faithful Weldi, to convince themselves that we were not wounded, that they would be quiet, and let us rest after our lively ride. All their horsemen mustered next morning to escort us on our return, which was diversified by a very pretty little chase after an enormous wild boar. F—— turned it after a couple of miles' run, and the brute charged him. Excellent horsemanship and the skilful use of his spear secured to him the victory, which was cheered by the Arabs forming a vast ring round the two combatants, when a last home-thrust laid the huge animal on his side, not to rise again. Taking the tusks to send home as a trophy, we proceeded on our way, meeting several parties of Bedaween, who gave so numerous a band a wide berth. We slept again at Aisheh, where the Ferdoon marvelled at our safe return. Next day, however, we were again in jeopardy. Having dismissed our escort, we were cantering past a large village, when we saw its whole population sally forth on foot with guns, and commence a steady fire upon us, which no hailing or signalling could put a stop to. Mending our pace, it soon took us out of range, and the circumstance was explained by our finding the sheep of the village on our course; we had been taken for Bedaween intent on driving off a flock. Further south, the desert was almost in a worse

state, and it was there that I must look for the Anezi with whom the Damascene women were said to be. O—— has also gone through one or two adventures. He was down near Palmyra, and was determined not to come back without seeing the ruins. There was so much fighting, however, that he could not trust to a plain Arab disguise, and he conceived the bold plan of becoming a camel-driver. A poor Arab was going to take a few camels to Palmyra to carry soda; O—— paid him the hire of his camels on condition of the job being sold to him, with the hire of the driver's wardrobe included. Thus equipped, he mounted the little donkey in front, and, giving the Arab call to the camels, proceeded in his new profession. He met several parties of horsemen, who disdained to molest one so poor. On nearing Palmyra, however, he saw a large party emerge from the ruins, and advance towards him, while behind them appeared a stronger body, half naked, their long shirts floating in the wind, and their heads uncovered; screaming out their war-song as they rushed at the other party, which turned to beat them off as they best could, whenever the pursuers came too near. Three or four were killed, and about ten wounded. The appearance of O—— and his camels caused a diversion in favour of the pursued, for the others came down upon him like a whirlwind, to rob a caravan as they thought. When they saw a humbly clad youth on a little donkey, all alone with a string of unladen camels in the middle of the worst part of the desert, far from suspecting that in him they saw a Swedish baron, not

inferior in pluck and skill with horse and arms to his own Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII., they took pity on him, and bade him follow them to Palmyra for protection, as the other party of Arabs had availed themselves of the incident to get away. Thus O—— saw the celebrated ruins at a time when few of the bravest Bedaween venture out unless in great numbers. Considering this state of the desert, it was necessary that I should take proper precautions before I could expect to reach the Amarat tribe, which had been near Damascus during the massacre, and had come this way to assist the Anezi in their war with the Shammar. I had ascertained that the Amarat were those with whom some of the Christian women then carried off to the desert might still be found. The Turkish authorities, possessing neither influence to persuade, nor power to coerce, could do nothing for them.

After the fall of Haji Batran, a governor of the desert had been appointed. Of all others, the Porte has selected for this post one of the notables of Aleppo, formerly a member of the Provincial Council. The purpose being naturally to promote peace among the tribes, and to further and protect the efforts made by some of them to exchange their roving and marauding habits for those of orderly cultivators, the choice of a nominee from that class which encourages lawlessness on the part of the Bedaween in order to mulct them of hush-money, and preys on the agricultural population by oppression and extortion in every possible form, was, to say the least of it, a most eccentric measure. Fuad

Pasha was deceived, and it would take the eyes of Argus himself to see through all the administrative delusions of this country when actual presence on the spot does not reduce them to their real proportions. Well, this newly appointed governor of the desert lives in the large village of Tadif, surrounded by a numerous guard of irregulars, and does not venture beyond its precincts, while Bedaween in bodies of seven and eight hundred ravage villages within a few miles of his residence. A small tribe was coming to join the settled Arabs the other day after much time spent in persuasion; suddenly the emissaries of the governor of the desert, with a party of irregulars, attacked it, and carried off their eight hundred sheep on the plea that they had been stolen from another tribe. No rightful owners were ever found, but the sheep were not returned, and the tribe thus plundered, abandoning all idea of settling and cultivating, went back to Mesopotamia. When I reached Tadif, and told the governor my purpose of seeking out the Amarat, he replied that it was impossible, that he could not guarantee my safety, and that it was consequently his duty to prevent my going further. I heard in the evening that the nearest Anezi tribe was the Erfuddi, who were encamped at a distance of about eight hours to the east; and finding an Anezi willing to take a message to them in the night, I waited his return, which was not until the next night was far spent, as no one could move alone in the desert by day. The poor governor was aroused out of his sleep by the awful tidings that Tadif was full of Anezi, and he came

to me for advice in great trepidation. To his still greater horror, he found forty of the dreaded Bedaween at my door, and my horse being saddled for me. At first he supposed that I was their prisoner, and that they were taking me by force to the desert; but I succeeded in explaining to him that I had sent for them, and was going with them of my own accord. I left him, still amazed, but evidently anxious to get rid both of myself and the Anezi; and we rode out of Tadif at two o'clock in the morning. Sajer, the sheikh of the Erfuddi, had sent his son Reja, a lad of eighteen, with some picked horsemen to accompany me to his camp. Reja is a perfect type of desert nobility, with delicate features and splendid eyes, tall but light in figure; wearing little else than a flowing white garment, mounted on a beautiful black filly, and gracefully poising his long spear as he cantered about, his whole appearance was that of a high-caste Arab. We had not gone many miles, before loud shouts in front gave the signal for a furious gallop, of which I was at a loss to comprehend the motive. I was riding a spirited young colt of the best desert blood, and he ran off with me before I could make out what we were after. Our race continued at tip-top speed, shouts still hieing us on, when I faintly distinguished a long dark line moving across the plain before us. Suddenly many flashes emanated from it, shots were heard, and bullets whistled about our ears. The shouts waxed louder and louder, our gallop more and more frantic. My colt became quite unmanageable with excitement, and his astonishing speed put me in

the first place. The whole dark line fired one more volley at us, but they had not time to load ere we were upon them. It was a large caravan. The camel-drivers begged for mercy, but the Anezi never show any under such commonplace circumstances. Sundry hard knocks from the butt-ends of their spears were the only reply. The head of the leading camel was quickly turned to our course, and in a very few minutes we were proceeding eastwards with our prize as if nothing particular had happened. I began to feel rather queer at finding myself thus on the less respectable side of the question—a companion, not a victim, of robbers. Reja was near me, and I heard him ask what the camels were laden with. It was wheat sent by Mehemed-al-Ganim to the Aleppo market. I immediately claimed the privilege of desert brotherhood; Mehemed-al-Ganim was my brother, Sajer had become my brother; the Erfuddi could not, therefore, keep the caravan. The Weldi camel-drivers crowded round me, confirming what I had said, and imploring me to liberate them. Reja, with great dignity of manner, said his tribe had come from near Bagdad to fight for the Anezi against the Shammar, and knew nothing of this part of the country, but that, if I would give him my oath that Mehemed-al-Ganim was my brother, the caravan should go free, and the more readily, for none of us having been hit by the fire of the Weldi. I pronounced the requisite formula, and the happy settlers turned back with their fifty camels and hundred sacks of grain; no dissatisfaction being

evinced by the Anezi at this unexpected result, so great is their respect for desert law. Shortly after dawn we reached the Euphrates, and found the Erfuddi encamped with three other tribes of Anezi; the Ibn Haddal, the Shumlan, and the Hayaza. I spent that day with them, trying to get some intelligence of the Amarat, and getting very little to eat, as these four tribes had had no provisions for three months but dates and camel's milk. Yet they gave up the Weldi wheat, when right was on the other side. Fortunately I like camel's milk, and kept taking occasional sips of it all day, which completely banished hunger. I learnt that the Amarat had been fighting with the Shammar for three days, and must be somewhere to the south. In the night I mounted with another party of Anezi, the Ibn Haddal, and proceeded under their escort, about twenty strong, in a southerly direction. Somehow, I felt tired sooner than I should have done; the air towards morning seemed to me intensely cold, and the gallop of my colt was surely rougher than usual. As I kept our party as much as I could at a slow walk, the day broke before we had reached any other encampment. The sky was clear, and the sun shone bright —for the season, very hot, as I thought. A severe headache, accompanied by aching joints, at last proclaimed an attack of country fever. We had left the Euphrates far to the north, and I suffered from parching thirst. I asked one of the Arabs if he knew of any water near. There was a spring a couple of miles to our right. Hoping to gain strength by a little rest, I

lay down on a bank, and sent some of the Bedaween with a leather bottle to fetch me some water. I was soon fast asleep, but I was suddenly awoke by those who had remained with me. Their comrades were returning as fast as their mares could carry them. When they came within hearing, they called out to us to mount and run, for they were chased. I thought of nothing but water, and they had brought none. On coming near the spring, they had seen eighty Bedaween at it, who immediately pursued them, and would be here in another quarter of an hour if we did not mount at once. I wanted to know if they had water, for, if so, I would wait for them. The only answer I could get was that they were Shammar, and, if we met, there would be more blood spilt than water. With my head splitting, and my back breaking, I bestrode my impatient colt, which at once bolted with me after the other horses. I let him run, pressing now my temples, and now the back of my neck with one hand, while the other held the useless reins. The Anezi led off into a long hollow, on entering which we saw our pursuers in full chase. We held our own without a single straggler, the Ibn Haddal being one of the best mounted of the Anezi tribes; and this was our only chance, as the Shammar behind us were as four to one. On advancing, the ravine appeared to trend greatly towards the west. An Arab rode parallel to our course along the higher ground on each side to keep the Shammar in view; the one on our right pulled up, planted his spear in the

earth, and with its aid sprang to his feet on the pad, like a circus rider, to see further. Quickly he came to us with the report that the Shammar had left the hollow, and were cutting across the angle to meet us. We dashed off to the east, crossed the bank without being seen, and, pressing our horses awhile in a direction contrary to that taken by our enemy, got clear away. In another hour we saw a camp, which the Ibn Haddal did not know. I assured them it could not belong to any other than the Lehep, a friendly tribe; adding that I would go and rest there, as I felt very unwell. They were sorry for me, but their sheikh would never forgive them for entering a camp they did not know, and if I persisted in going to it, I must go alone, as they would return to their own tribe. I consented, and we separated. As I proceeded slowly to the camp, several horsemen came out to see who I was; and my conjecture proving correct that they were of the Lehep tribe, I was received most kindly. There seemed to be very few people in the tents, but I asked no questions, as I had nothing more pressing than to sleep off my fever. I told them I had been chased, however, and lay down on a carpet with another over me and my saddle for a pillow, after drinking long draughts of water from the very spring, they said, which we had been driven from. When I opened my eyes it was night. I felt better and sat up. A number of the Lehep were in the tent, and they all crowded round me to kiss my hands, hoping I would pardon their having taken me for a Shammar. During the

chase they had remarked my colt, and had disputed amongst themselves whose it should be when taken; a good one it must be, they said, to have brought me in so long before them. I explained that we had come straight to the camp in leaving the hollow, while they had described a circuit by following it westwards. For supper they gave me rice, which I thought very good after dates and camel's milk, much as I like the latter. I slept well, and next morning I continued my search for the Amarat, taking hourly pills of sulphate of quinine, without a supply of which I have never moved since I have had this tiresome fever. The Lehep escorted me to this place, where another of their camps is pitched, amidst the ruins of the ancient city of Andrene, now called Hanassir. Its wells, still in good order, upwards of a hundred in number, constitute its attraction to the Bedaween, who often place their tents in the open spaces between lines of massive blocks indicating the streets and edifices now levelled with the ground. The citadel occupies a great truncated cone of earth artificially heaped and faced with stone, like many other old forts in Syria. This one is certainly prior to the Saracenic conquest, though traces of that style of architecture are to be found in the fallen buildings on it. The city must have been larger than Chalcis or Hierapolis, but I do not gather that its history was ever remarkable. The tale it tells now is simply that of depopulation in Syria since the Turks have held the country.

I have found the Amarat skulking without tents or

animals around this ancient town. I have visited every party of them I could hear of. They had just suffered a great defeat, with the loss of three hundred of their number, and they were still hunted down by their enemies, the Shammar. They were dispersed, and hiding amongst rocks and bushes, not knowing where their sheikhs were, if alive. I gathered from them that there had been young women in their camps, whom they said they had bought as slaves from persons they did not know, and that they had sold them when they could no longer feed them. After much cross-questioning, I discovered that the purchasers were some of the Aghel, who passed with desert caravans; and as this is the tribe which conveys Arab produce from one end of Syria to the other, and even into Persia, the poor Christian women are probably now far to the east. A month had apparently passed since the last of them was seen, and where to seek them now, was a question none could answer. I must, therefore, with great disappointment and annoyance, give up all hope of being able to do anything for them.

LETTER XIX.

Maronite Murders—Letters of the Bishops—Withdrawal of French Troops—Fuad Pasha's Conduct—Yusuf Bey Karam—Hoorshid and Tahir Pasha's Condemnation—Sentence passed on Said Bey Jumblat—His Death—Exile of Druze Chiefs—Indemnities—Death of the Sultan—A Christian Governor of Lebanon—Final Settlement—St. Simeon Stylites—Plain of Antioch—Turkomans—Circassians—Insurrection at Beylan—Daphne—Suadeah—A Railway—The Suez Canal—Russian Trade in the East.

Seleucia: July 10, 1861.

WHEN the French troops marched from Beyrout to Deir el Kamar and Zahleh, they were followed by a number of Maronites committing murders on the way. The construction put on the armed intervention of France in the country was thus manifested; its purpose was to take up the quarrel of the Christians, and oppose the Druzes and Turkish authorities, according to the conviction of all parties, not even excluding several most intelligent functionaries of the Porte. At the village of Ain Eyoob, those Maronite camp-followers killed an unoffending Druze, upwards of eighty years of age, and blind. An unfortunate Druze woman happened to pass one day near their bivouac; she was pelted with stones by the Maronites, and, taking to flight, she was stopped by a woman of that Christian community; a struggle took place between them, which brought them both to the ground; the Maronite woman,

having a knife, stabbed the other in the throat, and when she was dead, the savage cut her enemy's head off to carry home as a trophy. Without further enumeration in detail of the crimes encouraged by the presence of the French force, I need only say that there is reliable authority for no less than a hundred and seventy-six assassinations of Druzes by Maronites under the eyes of the army of occupation. General de Beaufort d'Hautpoul is reported to have been utterly disgusted with the part he has had to play, and with the effects produced by it in Syria. In many cases when Maronite murderers fell into the hands of his soldiers, he is said to have allowed a free use of the stick to record his opinion of them before sending them to the local authorities for trial.

The letters of the Maronite bishops, of which authentic copies have been obtained after their circulation on the mountain, sufficiently demonstrate the existence of an organised scheme for the extermination of the Druzes by whatever means might be available; and the conduct of the Maronites on the arrival of the French has been consistent with that fixed purpose. Tobias, the most influential of their prelates, addressed an unequivocal charge to the Maronite population of Deir el Kamar to effect the expulsion and ruin of the Druzes, while Sophronius, bishop of Tyre and Sidon, wrote to the Maronites of Hasbeya in a strain which throws so much light on the origin of the disturbances, and on the character of the pastor and his flock, that I add the following translation of his letter: — 'To our

glorious children, exalted and much-honoured, the sheikhs, nobles, and elders of our nation, the orthodox, at Hasbeya in the valley. May you ever be honoured! May the blessings of heaven be upon you! We declare to you, children, with regard to the events now passing amongst the Druzes, who are the corruption of the earth, and the perpetrators of crimes permitted by their religion, that our well-beloved Christians in the Lord must awake, and those having the power and being guarded by the protection of the Virgin must fall upon the Druzes whom Satan drives to crimes. There is on the mountain a gathering of the people of Zahleh, Deir el Kamar, Kesrawan, Jezzin, and the neighbouring places, and they will all rise like a single hand against the nation of the Druzes, which is small in number and weak, and they will destroy it, pour out its blood, seize its effects and possessions, and drive it out of the country which belonged to our forefathers, the orthodox, especially because we have received a letter from His Holiness our Lord the High Patriarch, instructing us to give our aid to this gathering of our people according as they may require it, and this is why the letter came, in order that each one of you may be provided with the necessary arms, and that you may mutually strengthen each other. Next, give notice to our Christian children around you, that your enemies the Druzes may be overpowered. It is resolved that on Monday, if it please God, our children shall fight under the banners of the venerable Emirs, whose zeal for our whole nation is not unknown to you. There-

fore be prepared, and, by the blessing of our Sovereign Mother of God, the country in all directions will be freed from your enemies, whose hostility to our religion is known to you. Our blessing be upon you.'

The French troops have done nothing in Syria. Indeed they had nothing to do, the Turkish forces having sufficed for all that was to be done. The French government, however, was unwilling to recall them after their futile military promenade, and notwithstanding that their presence prolonged the state of animosity existing between the different classes of the population and encouraged the commission of crimes to which they were already addicted. The French troops have, nevertheless, been withdrawn, and none of the evil consequences prognosticated on their departure have occurred, or appear likely to occur. The Mussulmans regard this cessation of a humiliating foreign occupation with so much satisfaction that little room is left for rancour towards the Christians, who, on their part, evince none of that alarm which was foretold as the necessary result of the embarkation of General de Beaufort's division.

But it would not have been a French intervention had it passed without insult to some one, and Fuad Pasha was insulted accordingly. The French general, when cooperating with the Turkish troops for the capture of the outlawed Druzes, officially accused the Sultan's plenipotentiary of conniving at their escape. There was littleness in the attack, and there was greatness in the defence. Fuad Pasha, without undignified

resentment, simply pointed out the extreme difficulty of stopping the flight of dispersed bands in their own country, which is mountainous, wooded, and rocky; and explained that, in consideration of that circumstance he had adopted other means by which he had succeeded in arresting fifteen hundred of them simultaneously. Moreover, the commandant of the Turkish force employed on this service was Ismael Pasha, General Kmety, than whom few military men in Europe have earned a better name for the knowledge of his profession, and for straightforward honesty of character. I believe there are not many persons in Syria now that the French troops are gone, who would disparage the merit of the services rendered by Fuad Pasha on the occasion of these disturbances, or impugn the sincerity of his efforts to restore order and administer justice.

Yusuf Bey Karam, whom I visited when at Tripoli, as I wrote to you from there, was appointed Governor of the Christians on Mount Lebanon. He had assembled two thousand armed men at the commencement of the conflict, and was marching to the relief of the Maronites when foreign authorities enjoined him not to advance. Had he not thus been stopped, the massacres might not have been attempted. Fuad Pasha seems to have appreciated his conduct, and in this there was at least impartiality, for Yusuf Bey is an avowed adherent of the French party, and a fanatical Maronite. For a time he rendered useful service, but his inordinate ambition and unbounded confidence in the power of his patrons led him to expect that he

would be invested with supreme authority on the Mountain, and, when he was disappointed in this, he retired to his own district, there to raise every obstacle he could to the fair settlement of all differences existing between the Maronites and the Druzes.

Hoorshid Pasha, Governor-General of Beyrout, has been sentenced to imprisonment for life; his culpability having been proved at his trial to have been confined to the adoption of weak and ineffectual measures, which he defended on the not altogether unfounded plea that the removal of troops from Syria to European Turkey just before the outbreak had deprived him of the means of doing better. Tahir Pasha, the military commandant, has suffered a similar condemnation for his blunder, to say the least of it, in leaving Deir el Kamar when further hostilities were imminent.

Said Bey Jumblat, whom I had met near Sidon, and whom I afterwards saw frequently at Beyrout, was sentenced to death; not for having taken an active part in any massacre, but as being the secret instigator of the war. This judgment was loudly called for by some of the foreign commissioners, and conscientiously opposed by others. His health, however, was such that his doom did not require judicial execution, and he died of consumption, hastened in its effect by imprisonment and anxiety. Reports were spread of suicide, and even of assassination, but the certificates of European medical men attending him leave no doubt of the fact that his death was natural. On the previous day he was visited by Lord Dufferin,

whose universally acknowledged ability in the discharge of his duties as British commissioner has been accompanied in all such cases, on whichever side of the question they occurred, by the most humane and benevolent spirit. Said Bey was much gratified by this considerate attention to a fallen man, of whose innocence I may add that Lord Dufferin had recorded his full conviction. That belief is so far borne out by perfectly conclusive evidence of the Druze chief having saved the lives of many Christians within the immediate sphere of his personal influence. On the occasion of his interview with Lord Dufferin, the subject of the assumed encouragement—or at least connivance—shown by the Turkish authorities to the massacres perpetrated by the Druzes, was discussed; and Said Bey, who knew that he was on his deathbed, stated that he was not cognisant of any fact corroborating the imputation of complicity on the part of the Turks excepting the otherwise unaccountable departure of Tahir Pasha from Deir el Kamar at the most critical moment, notwithstanding the earnest entreaty of Jumblat himself and of others that he should remain there. The dying man's last request to Lord Dufferin was that in the event of his recovering, he might be allowed to spend the rest of his life in England, far from the Turkish government. Strange to say, in his will was found an injunction that his children should be educated by an English tutor, and brought up as members of the Church of England. This has created a great sensation amongst the Druzes, who, in favour of Said Bey's great sagacity

and superior general information, believe that his soul had once occupied the human tenement of one of their most distinguished Okkal or initiated. True to their doctrine of transmigration, they now think that the souls of his children are those of Christian Apostles, who, having found out the truth after death, have returned to convert the British nation to the Druze religion.

Forty-three other Druze chiefs have been condemned to capital punishment, but have not been put to death, nor are likely to be, now that the current view has been fully established that the Maronites were the originators of the wish for a trial of strength, and the aggressors in the consequent hostilities. They will probably be exiled to distant parts of the empire.

A large sum of money has been claimed as indemnity by those who have suffered loss of property at Damascus and on Mount Lebanon—nearly a million sterling. Doubtless most of these claims are exaggerated, and it has been ascertained that in some instances Christians have tried to make their fortunes by asserting the loss of what never existed. About a hundred thousand pounds have already been devoted to this compensation-fund, and further sums may be added; but how much will be actually paid, is another question. Collection from the Mussulmans of Damascus and Druzes of Lebanon may perhaps ensure its being forthcoming. The indemnities awarded to the Christians for their losses in the massacre of 1850 at Aleppo have not yet been paid, excepting in a few cases of imperious foreign support.

When the rejoicings of the Mussulmans in general on the embarking of the French troops were beginning to subside, the death of the Sultan occurred, to call forth feelings of a similar nature on the part of the Turks, by whom his brother has been for some time looked upon as a man capable of raising the falling fortunes of their empire. Apprehensions were entertained that the excitement pervading the population, in consequence of the accession of Sultan Abd ul Aziz, might obstruct the settlement of affairs in Syria. The cry of the Mohammedans that Islam is saved, the appearance of an intention to provoke collisions with the Christians, and the rumours spread of the regular army being replaced by a revival of the Janissaries, gave rise to much alarm. Insults in the streets, and refusals to pay for articles bought from Christians in the bazaars, were of daily occurrence. Old prophecies were read aloud in the coffee-houses, manuscript copies of them being hired by the night. Interpretations were given to them, inciting the religious feelings of the listeners to bring about another crisis. Fuad Pasha became an object of vituperation for the executions at Damascus. Hatred of the French broke out in threats and maledictions. Even the more enlightened amongst the Mussulmans seemed to join in the prevalent fermentation. I heard one of them, a young man who had travelled all over Europe, say publicly that France is the worst enemy of Turkey, that he expected to see the realisation of the announcement contained in Monsieur Thouvenel's last note, and that, if French troops should thus again be

landed in Syria, the Moslems would kill the Christians, burn the towns, and fight till they are exterminated.

Gradually all effervescence subsided, and the affairs of Syria have now come out of their long-protracted state of crisis; the results of Fuad Pasha's mission and the international commission having just been made public, and the new Governor of Lebanon having arrived from Constantinople. He is an Armenian Christian of good antecedents, raised to the highest civil rank, under the title of Daood Pasha. The administration of the mountain is based on the following conditions. A Christian governor is to rule over both Druzes and Maronites, holding his appointment from three years to three years directly from the Porte. A representative of each sect, elected by the chief members of the different communities, will be in constant cooperation with the governor, but without sharing his authority or responsibility; in fact they will be merely his referees. A central council is to be formed of twelve members, chosen in equal proportions from the various sects; their functions will be restricted to a control over the taxation and expenditure, with a deliberative examination of all other questions which may be laid before them by the governor.' Besides this great council, six minor councils will attend to local interests in the districts of the mountain. Perfect equality of all classes before the law has been proclaimed. All privileges, feudal and fiscal, are abrogated. Regular tribunals are open to each nationality on the nomination of the respective communities, with the con-

firmation of the governor. A mixed police force is to be raised by voluntary enlistment in the ratio of seven men to a thousand inhabitants. The services of each constable will be confined to the community from which he has been drawn. The governor has, furthermore, the right to call on the military commandant in Syria to furnish him with Turkish troops when he may require them. Troops thus detached will be under the orders of the governor during the time they are serving on the mountain, which cannot be prolonged without his consent. A fixed assessment, equal to the average imposts of past years, will be paid to the Porte as a virtual, though not a nominal, tribute. This definitive regulation of the Druze and Maronite interests has been accepted by the five European Powers which had instituted the international commission, and the whole affair is for the present at an end.

We have come to the sea to breathe, after two months of suffocating summer. Our ride over the rocky wilderness to the east of the plain of Antioch was hot and uninteresting. On the second day we halted on the ancient Telenissa, or Mount Simeon, at the ruins of a monastery built in the fifth century around the column, now fallen, on which that crazed enthusiast lived and died in voluntary chains, leaving his name to the hill. The scene of the Stylite's aërial penance is forbidding enough without a pillar or chains, but the utter desolation of the spot formed perhaps its principal charm to the mind of the savage saint whose distempered fanaticism fell short only of that which lowered the

βοσκοί, or grazing monks of Mesopotamia, to the level of the herd in their common pasturage. At the height of sixty feet from the ground, and chained by the waist, the great Antiochian anchorite passed thirty long years on a space of three feet square, now praying erect with his arms stretched out in the figure of a cross, now bending his meagre skeleton till his brow rested on the stone so often that twelve hundred and forty-four successive repetitions of the act were once counted by the admiring crowd below. He died on his column, and his remains were conveyed with a procession, headed by the patriarch and six bishops, and escorted by six thousand soldiers, to Antioch, where his revered bones were preserved to perform miraculous cures even to comparatively modern times. Proçeeding towards the south, we crossed the circular plain, clasped in its girdle of rocks, which was formerly the site of that Immæ, where the beautiful Zenobia, more beautiful than her fair ancestress Cleopatra, rode fearlessly from rank to rank in vain encouraging her army to withstand the overwhelming shock of Aurelian's Roman legions. We then descended through a long and narrow ravine to the vast plains of Antioch, which lie dormant like the rest of the neglected empire to which they belong. No impulse is given to agricultural production by protecting it from the ravages of unruly tribes. The Turkomans on this great tract of fertile country are more troublesome than formidable; pernicious as an obstacle to prosperity rather than dangerous as enemies of the government. They are ad-

dicted to plundering small caravans laden with the petty wealth of local traffic from village to village, to carrying off corn, driving cattle before them when not adequately guarded, and rifling the slender baggage of solitary native travellers. The actual damage committed by them is trivial, but the maintaining of a state of insecurity becomes a serious evil. One year may pass in *quasi* tranquillity, while the next may see whole villages abandoned by their inhabitants, who despair of reaping where they have sown. Then the beys keep up continual feuds, nominally against the marauders of the day, really against the possessors of anything worth taking, however acquired. Thus Ahmed Bey Mursal, chief of the Rehauli tribe, was last year employed by the government to protect the roads; his cousin, Omer Aga, took the field with a couple of hundred horsemen to plunder all who passed that way. Ahmed Bey was forthwith dismissed, and Omer Aga appointed his successor. Ahmed Bey turned robber. Omer Aga became the true man. But not the less do caravans and travellers suffer. On the western confines of the plains of Antioch, where the Amanian range shuts them off from the sea, a large number of Circassians and Tartars, refugees from the south of Russia, have been sent by the Porte to colonise. They are landing also at Mersyne, whence they will be distributed over the plains of Marash, as well as those of this pashalik. Robbery seems to be their present pursuit, while preparing to form agricultural settlements. It would surely have been wise to reflect whether or not the

authorities, under whose rule they are intended to establish themselves, are in a position to preserve order before thus adding to the number of a disorderly population. The plains of Antioch, for instance, towards the north where the Russian refugees are located, are in the district of Beylan, the greater part of whose inhabitants rose a few days ago against their Turkish governor, and blockaded him in his residence. Irregular troops arrived from Antioch in time to protect him from further violence. But the insurgents appointed another governor of their own choice, and have kept the Turkish authorities prisoners in spite of the presence of troops. The motive of the outbreak seems to have been flagrant corruption on the part of the governor. However that may be, it is hardly under a similar *régime* that the wild Circassians and Nogai Tartars can be kept quiet.

We did not stop at Antioch, but hurried on to Daphne to lunch under grateful shade beside gushing cascades, once sacred to Apollo. The Persian conqueror, Chosroes, delighted to resort to the groves and fountains of Daphne, though Christianity had then already destroyed its shrines. Nature had done enough without art to make it still the most charming spot in the country. Following the course of the Orontes on its left bank amidst thickets of myrtle, laurel, and arbutus, with the gigantic Casius rising abruptly on our left to a height of five thousand three hundred feet, we crossed the river at a ferry, and left its lovely vale where it burst through a narrow opening into the lower

plain. The lofty cliffs on either side, too precipitous for a pathway, obliged us to continue our ride amongst the mulberry gardens to Suadeah, which name is given to the widely studded cottages of their cultivators. Several English settlers had built houses, but they are now all tenantless. There is no harbour; the mouth of the Orontes, being obstructed by a dangerous bar, can only give shelter to boats, and the ancient artificial port, or rather dock, of Seleucia, is entirely filled up. The ruins of the maritime city of Seleucus Nicator are extensive, but altogether levelled with the ground. A fine colossal statue, representing the river Orontes, lately dug up, and a curious tunnel constructed in the rock to prevent a winter torrent from flowing into the basin, with a great many sepulchral caves of considerable interest, are the only remains worth visiting. After examining these, and bathing in the sea like Chosroes, whose career of conquest closed here, but without offering any solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving to the sun as he did, we cantered along the sandy beach extending from Mount Rhosus to Mount Casius on our way to the dilapidated villa of a late British consul, where we had taken up our quarters. A crowd of Ansairi near it were engaged, when we arrived, in something like the act of worship of Chosroes; they were dancing round a small building in which a fire was blazing, and they jabbered Arabic all the time with a richness of gutturals that conveyed the impression of a tracheal epidemic vigorously combated by universal gargling.

Suadeah has been thought of as a terminus for a great Indian railway. Some prefer Alexandretta. The main consideration for this country is that the scheme should be soon carried out, be it from one point or from the other. To Great Britain it would naturally be advantageous, as bringing her eastern empire a thousand miles nearer than by any other route, and it would probably also restore the flow of trade to the channel in which it rolled its wealth to our shores of old. The Syrian desert is the keystone of an arch, stretching from Europe to Eastern Asia, resting on the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf as on two pillars, and bridging the natural transit and interchange of commodities between these two quarters of the globe. Twice have attempts been made to establish their communication by this way, and, without either having failed, both schemes have been abandoned. Five and twenty years ago, General Chesney successfully navigated the Euphrates by steam, and five years ago Sir John Macneill gave his high authority as an engineer in favour of the construction of a railway. Yet nothing is being done to secure the benefits of such a line at a time when Monsieur Lesseps is making rapid strides towards the completion of his Suez canal in the interest of France. We shall awake some morning with the whole Indian trade monopolised by others, and Napoleon's fleet on its way from Toulon to Bombay by the Red Sea, while ours may have to go from Portsmouth round the Cape of Good Hope to defend our Indian possessions. Even if the Suez canal should

prove a failure, which I think it will, it may still serve as a pretext for the presence of a French force in Egypt to stop the way to us in the event of a war taking place. Before British power in India rose to its present zenith, we had a rich Oriental trade nearer home. The Levant Company, now a barren tradition, was then a golden reality. The tide of our supremacy has since flowed further towards the east, and by another current, that set in by Vasco de Gama. That stream is now ebbing, and the question of opening new channels has become urgent. British commercial enterprise, like everything else with us, has its fits and fashions. A check in the India, China, or American trade suffices to divert its course. The establishment of a shorter route, a new facility for the importation of raw materials or exportation of manufactured goods, a sudden discovery of a fresh field of speculation, can at any time give an impulse to its coin-compelling flow. Then comes a reaction, and it returns to its previous channel when the diverting cause has ceased to operate. Thus, the introduction of railways may now have the effect of superseding the Cape of Good Hope line, which formerly ruined that on which the improved means of transport may be realised. The chief obstacle to this is the rivalry of Suez. The advantages derived by other states from the previous changes of route can still be annulled; France is open to disappointment in Egypt; Russia may lose her overland trade through Central Asia. A new route may become as beneficial to us as the existing lines are prejudicial.

Whether we regard the subject from a political or from a commercial point of view, and whether we enter into competition with France in the south or with Russia in the north, all present appearances foreshadow an ultimate predominance on the part of Great Britain, both in influence and in trade, if the population of this country were brought into more immediate contact with us by the reopening of the Syrian channel of communication. The question as regards France is as yet prospective, and will depend on the degree of success attending the construction of the Suez canal. But Russia has been our active rival for many years. Her agents have systematically represented her in these parts as an overwhelming central power fated to predominate over the destinies of the world. In this they are consistent with the political tendency of their nation towards despotism after the manner of Asia, and they find an echo in the political tendency of the population of Syria, which is essentially Asiatic. It brings them to the feet of the greatest despotism in the world, be it, or rather especially if it be, the very incarnation of oppression. Ivan the Terrible or Nicholas appears to them as legitimate a sovereign as Gengis Khan or Timour the Tartar. They do not penetrate the spirit and essence of a government, but are captivated by its form alone, if it be in harmony with their own inherent sympathy for visible power. The massive strength of Russia is thus homogeneous with the nations of the east. She has hitherto been without a rival in this respect. But the rise of trading

energies is now giving her a rival in Great Britain, in whose favour they militate. The original elements, which enriched bygone generations of dense populations, still exist in this country; in proportion as trade brings them into play, Syria is drawn towards England. Each cargo of cotton shipped is a blow to Russia. From the gradual development of resources to adoption as a channel for the trade of distant lands the progression is natural and easy. Geographically situated between Europe and the far east, especially since steam has made seas and continents the means of union rather than the cause of estrangement between widely-separated nations, the rich and level expanse of Syria and Mesopotamia must, one would think, soon act as a link for the binding together of the hitherto broken chain, and for the assimilation of divergent interests in some of the most important parts of the world. Such a union would be the greatest fact of modern history. Russia has been yet alone in her influence over this vast field of action. Our name is hardly known beyond the boundaries of the states conterminous with our Indian empire, and it is respected only as that of a great maritime power without a hold on the interior. France and the other European countries may be said to be utterly ignored, as far as present political influence is concerned, at any distance from the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Russia, on the other hand, stretched her fame years ago beyond the Uralian and Altai mountains. She formed establishments and raised fortresses, as stated in the work of Haxthausen,

n the northern regions of the obsolete Mogul empire. She boasts, through her poet Pushkin, of her sway extending from the Cremlin to the wall of China. Fifteen millions of Russian subjects press on two sides of Central Asia; they are made to learn the official Slavonian language, to attach them to Russia, while they are allowed to retain their vernacular Tartar, Mogul, and Manchoo dialects, which bind the non-annexed populations to them. They are called Christians, though practising Mohammedanism and Shamanism. Their customs, wants, and tendencies differ in no way from those of the neighbouring hordes whom they have taught to look up to them as a civilised people, and to envy the protection of the white czar, as they call the emperor of all the Russias. And this has been effected by a state which had neither political nor commercial existence a century and a half ago, when our Levant Company possessed a fleet of three hundred large boats of their own on the Euphrates for the transport of their merchandise. We were not wise when we conceded to the factory of British merchants at St. Petersburgh the exclusive privilege of trading with Central Asia. Both the Levant Company and East India Company had applied for it in vain. The route by the Caspian Sea and Astrakhan soon gained an advantage over the more southern line, a due of eight per cent. being the only charge. When, exhausted by constant warfare, Persia and Turkey had lost the power of protecting the Caucasian states, Russia, moved by feelings of compassionate humanity as recorded in the manifesto of

Alexander I., marched a couple of regiments through the Dariel pass, and occupied Georgia. To keep the various adjacent tribes from internecine feuds, the Persian provinces of Erivan, Talcih, and Nakhchevan, and the independent territory of Imeritia, Mingrelia, Abassia, and Gooriel, were taken possession of; and the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea became subject to Russia. All the country from the Euxine to the Caspian was thus annexed. The latter sea is now a Russian lake, connected with the centre of power by the great navigable river Volga. Seventeen steamers ply on the Caspian. Caravans convey goods from its southern and eastern shores, landed in three days from Astrakhan, to Khiva in twenty-five, Bokhara in thirty, and Samarcand, the ancient Tartar capital, in thirty-five; to Meshed and Herat, the principal marts towards the south-east, in fifteen and twenty-five days. The exports of Russia by her Asiatic frontier exceed the value of ten millions of roubles per annum, and her imports fifteen millions. Even Prussia sends her broadcloth by this route to China to the annual amount of a quarter of a million sterling. Were a channel of trade encouraged through Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia, all these results, so unfavourable to our interests, would fall to the ground, for it would be a cheaper line; and our trade would take the field on an equal footing with that of other countries. To the Turkish provinces, through which it would pass, it is a question of the greatest interest, for no other contingency could better or more rapidly enable their former prosperity to revive.

LETTER XX.

Circassians—Massacre of Mussulmâns by Christians—Rebellion of Armenians of Zeitoon—Their positions stormed by Circassians—Priests murdered—Zeitoon attacked—Monk killed—Treachery of Turkomans—Defeat of Government Irregulars—Cannon taken—Mussulman Conspiracy to massacre the Christians of Marash—Reinforcements procured from Aleppo—Tranquillity restored—Negociations with Zeitoon—Blockade commenced—Submission of the Armenians—Robberies—Murder of a Missionary—Crime in Turkey—Misgovernment—State of Turkey—Reforms—Colonisation—The Hatt Humayoon—Results?

Marash: August 25, 1862.

THE principal change I find here since my last visit is a change of persons. There seems to be little or none in the state of the country. Drunkenness was apparently not the sole vice of Hoorshid Pasha, who was then governor of Marash. He has recently been removed from his post for venality. His successor, Aziz Pasha, is a young man bringing an excellent reputation with him from previous posts. He has had to commence his functions here by the dangerous task of redressing the wrongs inflicted by his predecessor, who accordingly left the place, after justice had been done between him and those aggrieved by him, with threats of vengeance on Aziz Pasha. An opportunity was not long waited for. Hoorshid Pasha, like most others similarly circumstanced, soon found means of obtaining favour at Constantinople, and he has returned to this

part of the country in the higher rank of Governor of Adana. His influence at Marash, exercised from so near a point, has been most injurious to Aziz Pasha, as I shall explain presently.

I find also a great change in the physiognomy and costume of the inhabitants. I left here only Turkomans and Armenians; and now the majority of those one sees in the streets are Circassians. These hungry refugees treat Turkey as a conquered country, swaggering about, all bristling with arms, and abusing every person daring to make the least objection to their insolence and lawlessness. They sell their children freely, both male and female. One Turk has bought eight for about three hundred pounds. They are even accused of kidnapping children of the country to dispose of as slaves. A caravan of natives rescued, it is said, a boy of four years of age, whom a Circassian was carrying in a large saddle-bag, and who happened to cry as they met on the road. The capture and sale of prisoners from hostile tribes was the origin of this nefarious traffic. The market for slaves was in Turkey, where the menial offices were performed chiefly by foreigners, and where polygamy offered a provision for well-favoured Caucasian damsels. The supply having become unequal to the demand, the Circassians began to send their own flesh and blood to the market. It is truly a strange spectacle to behold a people, always ready to fight valiantly for its liberty, and yet basely selling that of its offspring. It is idle to gloss over the barbarism of the practice, as some writers have done,

by alleging that paternal solicitude finds in it the best mode of securing a comfortable establishment for handsome daughters, and a means of opening a high career for clever sons, or that patriotism sacrifices even the ties of family to provide for the purchase of ammunition to defend an invaded country. The plain prose of such poetic flights is that the Circassians regard their children as property of the same nature as their mountain goats, and dispose of them accordingly. The mild character of slavery under the Turks, the kindness of the Mussulman husband, tainted with contempt though it be, in domestic life, prove that Turkish cruelty in families was a fable, or has been mitigated; but the Circassian father is not the less unnatural on that account. The Circassians, on the contrary, have in this respect continued in the barbarous state they were in when Jason led Greeks thither in search of the mythic golden fleece; which, by the way, meant probably the mode of collecting gold in the beds of rivers, still practised, by sinking sheepskins to catch the precious particles washed down by the stream. That the Phœnicians also entertained commercial relations of a similar character, and perhaps at an equally remote epoch with that of the Argonauts, is evident from the foundation of their colony of Pronectus, and from the mention of them by Ezekiel under the names of Tubal and Meshech as traders in the persons of men. It was probably a custom all over the thinly-peopled globe in very ancient times, and it is remarkable that the progress of enlightenment should have failed to do away

with it only in the region first inhabited after the flood. The Circassians deserve, however, all credit from us for their protracted opposition to the advance of Russia, which is indirectly advantageous to England. Shut out from the south by eight hundred miles of sea, Russia had but two lines of conquest to follow. That round the western shore of the Euxine has been contested by a long series of wars, and is closed for the present by the Treaty of Paris; the other, turning the eastern flank of the barrier, and leading through Armenia, Koordistan, and Turkish Arabia, to the Persian Gulf, has been opened by the Crimean war. The Circassian struggle to retain independence is an obstacle in her way, for Russia, though possessing Georgia, would not leave an armed foe in her rear, as Turkey did with Montenegro in Europe and the Armenians of Taurus in Asia, to her frequent great discomfiture. Napoleon III. well understood the importance to Great Britain of this eastern outlet for Russian conquest, which might seriously endanger our relations and communications with the far east. He was our sincere ally in the Crimean war until the siege of Kars involved an English interest alone, when he placed every possible impediment in the way of its relief, and allowed Mouravieff to take and destroy the only fortress on the Armenian frontier of Turkey. This was a victory over England, which Russia, taking advantage of our having a Queen's Commissioner and his small staff of British officers with the Turkish army, represented as a defeat of British forces, but which was more serious

to us than a mere military disaster, because it removed one of the bulwarks of the east against Russia, and Turkey will not probably ever construct another. The first line of defence is still unbroken in the gallant resistance of the Circassians. It may appear ungracious on the part of an Englishman to say anything against them. But I cannot see in them the least merit as a nation beyond that of great personal bravery. They have played a prominent part here during the last few weeks, in which they have fully maintained that national reputation.

A dispute arose between two Mussulman villages in this neighbourhood, by name Ketma and Beshen, regarding the boundaries of a field. The claimants of Beshen asked the chief of Alabash, an adjoining Armenian village, to act as umpire between them and their adversaries in the suit. The inhabitants of Ketma refused to accept his judgment when he repaired thither for that purpose with some of his people. An altercation ensued, then a scuffle, in which the son of the chief of Alabash, four other Armenians, and two Moslems, were killed. During the following night, the Armenians went to the village of Ketma in a large body. Of sixteen men, whom they found, only three left their houses alive. Even these lost their lives afterwards by drowning in the river Jihoon, which they attempted to swim when pursued. The Armenians in the village, supposing the three men had escaped, declared that three children should answer for each of them. Nine children were accordingly put to death.

The women of Ketma sought protection and justice at Marash, one of them showing a deep gash in her shoulder, inflicted by an Armenian in the act of cutting off the head of an infant in her arms, while her three other children lay murdered around her. The villagers of Alabash were called upon to give up the perpetrators of these atrocities. On their refusal, an irregular force, numbering nine hundred and forty men, was sent to capture them. The Armenians then took up arms, and marched towards Marash, about eight hundred strong. Three days were given them to reconsider their rebellious refusal to surrender. It was repeated at the expiration of the term. They were then attacked. During the three days, the Armenians had dug trenches and raised breastworks to defend themselves. The resistance on their part was obstinate. Some Circassians, amongst the irregular troops raised for the expedition, carried the first earthwork with the greatest gallantry. They were all wounded in the assault except their Bey, who rushed on alone to attack the second trench about fifty paces higher. He was shot down before reaching it. Others came up, and the Armenians were finally driven from all their defences, leaving thirty-eight killed. The irregulars lost ten men. A guard was immediately placed over the women and children in the village. The houses were plundered. Amongst those who escaped were the murderers of Ketma; they took refuge at the principal Armenian town of the district, Zeitoon. The irregular force was then augmented to the effective strength of three thousand one hundred,

six hundred of whom were Circassians, and the remainder Turkomans of the neighbouring plains, and townspeople of Marash. The expedition marched against Zeitoon under the command of Aziz Pasha. On the way through a mountain pass leading thither, the Armenian villagers of Mukhal attempted to stop its onward progress. After a short action the village was taken, sacked, and burnt; and its inhabitants retired to Zeitoon. The convent of Perghich was also on the road; some Circassians forced its gates, and butchered the superior, two deacons, and an old woman servant, whose bodies they stripped, mutilated, and piled on the roadside with the carcase of a dog placed on them, in a manner too abominable to bear description in detail. The total loss of life had amounted hitherto to about a hundred and twenty on the side of the Christians, and between seventy and eighty on that of the Mussulmans. Of the latter many were conveyed to Marash wounded; the Armenian inhabitants of the town finding safety in keeping within doors, while the convoys were passing through the streets, so great was the rage and excitement of the Moslem population at sight of wounds inflicted on the true believers by Christians. When the expedition reached the vicinity of Zeitoon, the town was summoned to surrender, and to give up the murderers. Negotiations were commenced with every prospect of a favourable issue, the only condition proposed by the Armenians being that the Circassians should not be permitted to enter their town. A corps of irregulars, about eight

hundred in number, forming part of the expedition, suddenly advanced upon Zeitoon without orders from Aziz Pasha. It was commanded by a certain Ahmed Pasha, a native of Marash, who had raised it from amongst the lower orders of his Mussulman fellow-townsmen. He is the intimate friend of the ex-governor, Hoorshid Pasha. Seeing themselves attacked, the Armenians of Zeitoon sallied forth in a well-armed body to give battle, for they enjoy a high character for martial qualities. The irregulars were at once withdrawn by Ahmed Pasha, but the Circassians, who had come forward to support them, engaged the Christians, and a sharp and bloody contest was sustained between them for about an hour. The Armenians were driven into their town with great slaughter. The Circassians followed them, fighting in the streets, and plundering the houses in spite of a most courageous defence by their inmates of both sexes. A large convent stands on the hill above the point attacked. The monks barricaded its doors and windows, and fired from the roof on the Circassians. A field-piece was brought up. One monk came out, to parley as was supposed, and prevent the cannon being pointed at the convent. He was immediately cut down by a Circassian, who called him an accursed Russian. The building was set fire to. Aziz Pasha, who was near, succeeded in saving it; and rendered thereby meritorious service to his government, which might have been seriously embarrassed by the consequences of the destruction of a Christian monastery full of friars and priests when

foreign cabinets are known to be watching for such an opportunity. Indeed Monsieur Thouvenel's note on the withdrawal of the French army of occupation says so most unequivocally. The Circassians, while fighting with the Armenians, frequently reinforced in front, found themselves in the most unexpected manner vigorously assailed on the flank by a body of nine hundred Turkomans of the Tajerli and Kiligli tribes, who were with the irregular troops. These Turkomans were led on by Suleyman Aga, who had given us hospitality in his camp on our previous visit to Marash, and who had afterwards become a devoted adherent of Hoorshid Pasha, and had been amnestied as a rebel by the Porte on the recommendation of that governor. He is said to have hurried off to Adana to receive instructions from his patron when he was called upon by Aziz Pasha to take command of the Turkomans with the expedition. This treacherous onslaught by those regarded as comrades threw the Circassians into confusion. The Armenians rallied. They captured the whole party in charge of the field-piece, and took the gun into Zeitoon in triumph. All the irregulars commenced retreating in the greatest disorder. The Circassians were the last to run, but they too joined the rout, leaving sixty-two of their men dead on the field. The Armenians, who buried those killed on both sides, declare that they were more than four hundred. Towards evening the remains of the irregular force poured into Marash, wild with disappointment and rage. Aziz Pasha reached the town about midnight. Exposure

to the sun, fatigue, anxiety, and shame at his defeat, brought on typhus fever, which has kept him prostrate in mind and body ever since.

The greatest excitement arose in the town when the circumstances became known. Nothing less than a general massacre of all its Christian inhabitants would satisfy the indignant Moslems. Outbursts of grief and resentment, over dead and wounded, threatened at every moment to give the signal. The head of an Armenian, brought by a Mussulman from Zeitoon at his saddle-bow, was carried about the town, and money was paid to him by the Mussulmans to whom he showed it, as a pledge that they would rise and fight. Boys afterwards kicked it through the streets, and it was finally thrown into the river. Thirty of the chief Moslems assembled in a mosque with closed doors to organise their revenge. The different quarters of the town inhabited by Christians were distributed amongst them for murder and rapine, that each might have his due share for his followers. But regular troops had, meanwhile, been procured from Aleppo, and, on the morning after the repulse at Zeitoon, a battalion of rifles, two squadrons of dragoons, and two field-pieces, marched into the town. Patrols and pickets were immediately established in the streets. An intimation was sent to the thirty Moslem conspirators, with a paper containing all their names that they might see they were known, to the effect that, if they ventured to stir out of their houses, they would all and each of them be at once marched off to Constantinople under

an escort of regulars. The Armenian Bishop of Marash was then sent to Zeitoon with a warning that the bridge of the Jihoon and the three mountain passes leading to that town would be occupied by riflemen, if the murderers of Ketma were not given up within three days. All the grain of the Armenians, being still on the threshing-floors when the irregulars passed the villages, some of which were abandoned by their inhabitants, had been burnt, and Zeitoon could thus be starved into submission. It was announced, however, that the women and children would be allowed to remove to the Armenian villages whose population had returned to their homes, and that Zeitoon would be supplied with corn by the authorities as soon as it should show obedience to them. On the fourth day, no answer having been received, fifty irregulars were sent to the bridge, to precede the regulars about to blockade the place on all sides. The bishop was sent back when it was thus seen that the threat had been made in earnest. He brought proofs that all the murderers of Ketma had been killed in the fight before and in the town of Zeitoon, excepting one who was lying so badly wounded that he could not be moved. A full submission to the government was made at the same time. The captured field-piece was returned. A Turkish governor was then sent to Zeitoon, and was well received there. A sum of thirty-five thousand piastres was paid by the Armenians as arrears, and further instalments were promised. A mixed commission was formed to verify the losses of unoffending persons with a view to compensation. The

question of the treatment of the Circassians still remains to be settled. I hoped that those who had been guilty of atrocities, especially such as were committed at the convent of Perghich, might be severely punished, but it appears that the services they have rendered to the government will be regarded at Constantinople as a set-off. The whole irregular force has, meanwhile, been paid and disbanded. This was necessary and urgent, although disorders might ensue, for their insolence and lawlessness exposed the population to greater dangers when they were in the service of the government than after their dismissal. Robberies still occur daily, however. No Christian dares to offer his wares for sale in the bazaars of Marash, or take out his mules to bring grapes from his vineyard, for the Circassians at once seize them, and, when objection is made, draw their long knives, demanding the blood of their bey, killed by the hated Russians, as they persist in calling the Armenians. Indeed, the whole country is in a worse state than ever. The Turkomans, having betrayed their trust in the fight, and fearing the consequences of their act, make themselves more formidable than usual as robbers in hope of bringing the authorities to treat with them. When hard pressed, they go to the woody and rocky recesses of the Ghiaoor Dagh, whither no pursuit can overtake them, and whence they descend to make fresh depredations. Even at Alexandretta merchants' stores and warehouses are invaded, and goods carried off with impunity. One of them, well acquainted with the Turkoman chiefs,

having suffered a loss in this way, knew so well where to look for his missing bales that he wrote to them at once; and found them next morning before his door uninjured. A very shocking murder took place a short time ago on the road from Adana by the Ghiaoor Dagh to Alexandretta. The Rev. Mr. Coffing, a much-respected American missionary, accompanied by a servant, two muleteers, and one irregular soldier, was suddenly fired at from behind some brushwood. Mr. Coffing was mortally wounded, as also his servant, and one muleteer severely, the other slightly. The soldier galloped off at once unhurt. Three horses bearing their baggage were taken. Mr. Coffing contrived to go on for some time, but was at last from loss of blood unable to proceed further. He lay down on the sandy beach. The muleteer, who had suffered least, went as far as Alexandretta to give the alarm. Mr. Coffing was conveyed thither, and died next morning. His servant was brought in on the following day, and lived only to tell the particulars of the attack, which Mr. Coffing was past explaining when he was found. The muleteers both recovered, the soldier was not forthcoming, and the horses were sold by some Turkomans in one of the villages.

Crime in Turkey differs essentially from crime in Europe. Here we have no gangs of housebreakers, no shoplifters, or pickpockets. The vigilance of the police is not eluded; it is defied. No stigma attaches to acts of violence. In Europe towns are infested by malefactors, while the country is comparatively free from

them. In Turkey it is rare to hear of murders or robberies in towns, and this absence of what would be called elsewhere ordinary crime is very remarkable, but the population of the country is a prey to lawlessness. Police is not what is most wanted in Turkey; it is government. The want of government creates here lawless classes, not individual criminals. Lord Macaulay says that no ordinary misgovernment will do as much to make a nation wretched as the constant effort of every man to better himself will do to make a nation prosperous. The constant effort of most Turks to better themselves belongs to one of two descriptions; plunder and bribed connivance. High and low, official and unofficial, rich and poor, all follow the tortuous groove of peculation, corruption, and extortion, on the one hand, or are addicted, on the other, to armed depredations. I allude, of course, only to the provinces of Turkey, as I have already more than once specified in remarking on the state of the country. Were the astonishing perseverance and ingenuity employed in the pursuit of illicit gain, and the great courage and skill displayed in acts of violence, turned into the wide and legitimate channel referred to by our distinguished historian, they would, by a parity of reasoning, make the nation very prosperous. But, to effect anything of the kind, a new social order must be inaugurated, which would admit of both classes earning their livelihood honestly, and some moral distinction must be established between what is right and what is wrong that crime should be stigmatised. For the usual

isolated disturbances, remedial measures, more or less prompt and efficacious, may be expected from the Turks, but, when a people is thus perverted, as well as misgoverned, all practical improvement to be looked for from the Porte can, I fear, be of little avail. The evil is deep-seated in a country where labour is not allowed to be productive, and plunder in all its varieties is encouraged by sharing its profits. Lord Macaulay's ordinary misgovernment theory has no application here. This is a stupendous misgovernment, and the nation is very wretched.

The state of Turkey can only be judged fairly in connection with her history since the commencement of the present century, and by the light of all the collateral evidence which that history is able to furnish. Many writers have treated the problem as being, what we should think of a single unfavourable occurrence, and what deductions should be drawn from it. Certainly, if this is all that has to be answered, Mussulmans are simply monsters, and the sooner they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better it will be. But the first point which history and common sense concur to call in question is, that the existing evils arise from an overweening sense of strength. I believe, on the contrary, that they originate in a source diametrically opposed to this, a galling sense of weakness, in presence of a rising Christian supremacy, and a designing foreign exasperation. I have no sympathy now, however, with the apologetic literature of the philo-Turkish school. The former class of publications found

favour in the eyes of our grandfathers; the latter became more or less popular some twenty years ago. Both are obsolete. Theories are out of fashion. This is the age of facts, and one must grapple with them, and find out what they are made of. I have stated my idea on the subject, and I have narrated many circumstances and incidents which have come under my notice since I have been in this country; it remains for others to judge whether or not my idea is borne out by them.

There have been collisions between religious sects, hostile tribes, and factious parties. These I regard as symptoms of the decline of a dominant race, bursting forth in occasional recrudescences in proportion as the rise of another social order becomes felt, and allowing conflicting interests to fight out their own battles. Such contingencies were more rare before the struggle commenced between absolute predominance and the assertion of equal rights. They prove, therefore, that a change is taking root in favour of the Christians, and not merely that the Christians are oppressed by the Turks. Yet, these same Christians appeal to Europe on each recurrence, whining out their fears, festered into grotesque and monstrous forms of fanaticism, of which they mysteriously reveal portentous specimens. Antiquated foreign enthusiasts, loving to parade forgotten lore, and indulging the play of fancy at the expense of rigid truth, rave in the very madness of philanthropy, grown cruel to Moslems in assumed mercy to Christians. People, who know nothing of Turkey as she

really is, having only taken the bird's-eye view of the traveller, or studied the aspect of her capital, go home to echo the strain till all Christendom is ripe for another crusade. Then, certain continental cabinets consider it their duty to interfere. Encouragement on one side, exasperation on the other, do their work sooner or later, and another outburst arises from the embers of the last one. Thus it goes on, and will go on, till the game shall have been played out, and foreign policy shall have attained its object. Acrimonious language publicly held with regard to Turkey also envenoms the relations between the two communities, and between one of them and other states, for it is always translated into local newspapers, to the wild exultation of Christians, and the bitter resentment of Turks. So much, indeed, has this been the case, that every disturbance, be it even a result of agitation from abroad, becomes an engine for the production of another, while it unhappily arrays, at the same time, some of the leading minds of Europe against even what is least unsound in Turkey, and least imputable to the Turks. In the strength of the assertions, people overlook their want of verisimilitude. My belief is altogether of a general character, and unaffected by particulars adduced to give colour to narrations and foregone conclusions. What happens in Turkey might happen, I feel convinced, were the whole population of one religious faith. It is composed of two distinct antagonistic elements, the reciprocal asperities of whose relative position are not smoothed down by the double attrition of

any intermediate class. The Mussulmans are a land-holding aristocracy; the Christians are peasants and tradesmen. In most other countries, a third element occupies a species of neutral ground, deriving an easy independence from both agriculture and commerce, and serving as a shield to the labouring classes against a spirit of encroachment on the part of the nobles, while it is ready to uphold the rights of the latter against popular lawlessness. This is wanting in Turkey. The tilling, trading, and industrial portion of the population, not being bound to the dominant race by the ties of mutual interest, as employed and employer, knows no feeling in unison with that of the Turk, who arrays against it, not only the overwhelming lawful power of a despotic system of government, but also the still more debasing and the less legitimate form of oppression, founded on personal position gained by bribery, with the consequent necessity of draining the produce of labour and industry to supply the means of corruption. This has no reference, it will be perceived, to religious distinctions, and it exists as much in districts inhabited by Moslems alone as in those having a mixed population. In such a state of society patriotism cannot live. The noble seeks only the patronage of a greater noble. The boor strives solely for the tranquil enjoyment of his due share in the fruits of the earth. The trader, or artisan, toils for the realisation of the fair profits of hisshop or loom. Tax-gatherers are the dreaded enemies of all except the noble, in whose service they are. No class has thus a care beyond its own

immediate wants. The first thirsts for money to purchase favour, and desires favour to amass money. The second and third hoard a pittance to meet the exactions of the local administration. It is self-evident that reforms are called for; equally so, that they must come from without. The Mussulman grandee, if consulted by the Sultan, would assent to the premises, and then propose, as a remedy, that he should himself be made Governor-General of his native province, or Grand Vizier, concluding with the insinuation that he would in that case feel honoured by permission to supply the imperial kitchen with butter and cheese gratis for a year. The Christian labourer or tradesman would first wonder what his Imperial Majesty could want from him so important that the demand should be preceded by holding out such unrealisable hopes, and, when convinced that only his own advantage was sought, he would accept the benefits offered on the one indispensable condition, that he should be taken into foreign consular protection, in order that his life might be saved in the massacre which the improvement of the state of the Christians would infallibly give rise to, or, if it should not be saved, that his family, through that protection, should receive an indemnity ten times greater than the fortune they might have lost. Reforms must be introduced in Turkey by foreign pressure; not nominally, as heretofore, but really introduced; not merely to affect the political position of the Ottoman empire, in relation to other states, as heretofore, but to supply a remedy so loudly called for by the evils within it. Turkey is received into the

concert of Europe, as it is styled; this does not modify the domination of the Turks, which must be admitted to be the first desideratum; it only enables them to contract loans, so far as I can see, and other loans to pay the interest of the previous ones. The integrity of the Empire is guaranteed; this, again, does nothing to arrest the internal decline; it only makes the Turks look about them to see which of their provinces is to be taken from them next; after Transylvania and Hungary had been wrested from them by Austria; the Crimea, Bessarabia, and the Kuban, by Russia; Servia made independent; Wallachia and Moldavia nearly so; Greece, a separate state, after the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, by England, France, and Russia; Algeria taken by France; and Egypt made an heir-loom in the family of Mahomed Ali, by England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. The Turks think us strange people. But, as they accept a guarantee for their frontiers, they submit also to the changes imposed on them in their system of government. They admit them in principle, but defeat them in detail. In this latter operation, they have proved themselves more skilful than their advisers. Still we go on advising, I believe.

Reforms are brought about in Europe without danger or difficulty, because their necessity or expediency is felt by the people, and the government grants them accordingly. Here the people do not wish for reforms, the Moslems knowing they have everything to lose by them, the Christians fearing lest they lose more than

they gain. Reforms must therefore be applied without any preparation of the public mind. It is still doubted by many that Sultan Abd ul Aziz really desires reforms; but, supposing him to be seriously and sincerely disposed to introduce them, the question of the means he can employ is full of difficulty. The Koran forbids his following the example of Peter the Great, and bringing able men from Christian countries, while the few Europeans in the Turkish service are rendered powerless by being obliged to assimilate themselves to the Turks, or lose their posts by refusing to do so. Had it been otherwise, Turkey might have been saved by the same iron hand which raised France from the ruins of her revolution; for Buonaparte had determined on entering the Sultan's army after the siege of Toulon, and only wanted a little encouragement to carry out his purpose. There is little to be hoped for from the plan of sending clever young Turks to be educated in Europe, and to serve an apprenticeship in the different departments of administration there, for, if we may judge by many of those Turks who have adopted European ideas, the sacrifice made of what is respectable in the old Turkish character is greater than the gain of a mongrel civilisation. Islam once betrayed, as the good Mussulman says, nothing remains to be moulded into the perfect form of an upright public servant. The Turk is emasculated when his Mahometan principles are taken from him. Yet the formation of a body of honest officials is a measure which, if possible, would go far to place Turkey in a hopeful position.

The open plunder practised is strikingly inconsistent with the indubitable honesty of a numerous class of the Turks in their private and commercial relations. Whether it be a lingering remnant of a past state of society, in which rapacious Satraps left no defence but roguery, and no other feeling towards them than hostility, or the more immediate result of a deep abhorrence of all innovations on the ancient Mussulman law, is uncertain, as indications of both origins are discernible. Mussulmans often seek foreign protection during litigation before Turkish authorities, implying thereby a rooted distrust of them; and Mahometan merchants are unwilling even to give receipts for the payment of duty on their goods, or of new imposts, because they are not sanctioned by the Koran, evincing a disapproval of them, from which there is an easy transition to defrauding the state. The benefit derived, moreover, from applying a curb to venality and corruption can at best be only partial and temporary, unless it be accompanied by the development of the vast resources of the country. The two questions act and react on each other. Money circulates, whether honestly or not, without increasing the national wealth and prosperity, when it is not employed in a productive form. It flows from the threshing-floor of the industrious cultivator to the coffers of the grinding tax-gatherer, who passes it on in bribes, through a graduated hierarchy of needy spendthrifts, till it supplies the superfluous profusion of the imperial household. Supposing its progress to be confined to the purest possible channels, still the country

would remain impoverished if the mines of riches it possesses are left closed by neglect and by the want of adjustment in their essential conditions. Thus, Syria might send incredible amounts to the Sultan's treasury, were cultivation extended over the boundless fertile plains on its eastern frontier, were the Nomadic tribes encouraged to settle in the many deserted towns and villages with which they are studded, and were the rivers and smaller streams diverted into canals, after the manner of the ancient Babylonians, for the irrigation of crops and plantations suited to the soil and climate. To effect this, the only thing wanted is security. The elements of prosperity are abundant, but they cannot be made productive as long as the Arabs, Koords, and Turkomans are allowed to commit depredations at will. In the present state of the Turkish Empire it may seem utopian to contemplate such a career of improvement, but the means would be forthcoming if the energy to use them could be found. It would require some annual outlay to enable the better-disposed tribes to complete a cordon of military colonies on the skirts of the desert, and to maintain a sufficient force for their protection against the more unruly tribes. This might be supplied by recasting the establishment of irregular troops, now kept up at a great expense and with little advantage, and by small savings in other less important branches of the provincial administration. The different details of the organisation of this country are so dove-tailed into one another, that in tracing them one is led from effect to cause until the higher sources of

evil are exposed; economy is the keystone of the administrative arch; and, when one sees the magnates of the nation squandering in official pomp and private luxury the hard-earned gains of the productive classes, the impulse is irresistible to remind the Turks of that simplicity of habits, both public and personal, which formed the characteristic trait of their brilliant rise as a nation, and which can alone save them from their present advancing decay. Instead of seeking to realise the means of establishing tranquillity in the desert, the Turks make discord amongst the tribes inhabiting it a source of corruption. This policy is as short-sighted as it is demoralising, for the hardy sons of the Syrian plains, had the Turks secured their allegiance by acts of justice and humanity, might have become an element of internal consolidation and a bulwark against aggression from abroad, rather than one of the many existing causes of the weakness and decline of the Ottoman Empire. The country can never remain long quiet, I feel convinced, until the evil of Bedaween disorders be taken seriously into consideration. Remedial measures are obvious, and by no means difficult of realisation, but the importance of the subject is not duly appreciated in the proper quarter. It is not the desert alone that suffers, as I have shown in previous letters. The whole territory of Syria is crushed by the weight of misgovernment. Its extent and fertility sufficed for the support of ten millions of inhabitants, as recorded by both Strabo and Josephus; now there are barely a million and a half. Perfect salubrity of climate, and a

patient, frugal, and laborious race of cultivators, with an active and intelligent trading community, leave little wanting in Syria, for a rapid increase of population, and a degree of welfare now unknown, but the security of life and property, and the construction of roads for the cheap transport of produce to the coast. It is true that the agricultural and industrial classes are arrayed under hostile creeds, both under the domination of an oppressive aristocracy. We hear of Christians oppressed by Moslems, but there are two other categories of which little is said, though their existence is equally undeniable; I mean the oppression of Mussulmans by Mussulmans, and that of Christians by Christians. All this, together with the intolerable evil of foreign protection of classes and interference in religious differences, renders the prospects of Syria more clouded than those of other portions of the Turkish Empire. Greece, for instance, was one of its provinces thirty-five years ago; that she enjoys some, if not all, the benefits of political development, is evident in the fact that her population, without having augmented, draws twenty times the amount of manufactured goods from England that it consumed when the Sandjaks of Morea and Roumelia existed; but Greece possesses a perfect unity of faith and nationality, while Syria, on the contrary, is a prey to religious factions and national enmities, impeding all progress, and furnishing a pretext for the subversion of tranquillity by foreign states. On the whole, however, the results of the experiment made by George Canning

with that portion of the Turkish Empire do not encourage Europe to try another. Volney narrowly escaped the Bastille for advising France to join Russia against Turkey, when Joseph of Austria had shaken the equilibrium of power by his alliance with Catherine the Second, and to form a Christian empire, as a geographical necessity, with the command of the Bosphorus. Leibnitz proposed to Louis the Fourteenth the conquest of Egypt, which he felicitously styled the Holland of the East, to form a Christian empire with Syria, and open the route of trade from India. In spite of the authority of two such distinguished philosophers, the facts of the present day point to another solution of the fate of Turkey. The political education of the Sultan's Christian subjects has made so little progress since those days that a violent change would still find them greatly in arrear of all opinions regarding them as prepared for self-government. Nor do I see that their political education stands much chance of being speedily perfected, if time and opportunities are not allowed and improved for the maturing of the seeds sown by the edict of Gulkhaneh.

A long residence in the Turkish provinces must produce the conviction that nothing can be worse for their Christian inhabitants than the measures adopted by influential cabinets on the occurrence of sudden disasters. Momentary necessity moulds their will to try strong remedies. Success, however sagaciously pursued, remains unrealised; and the most skilful combinations leave effects widely different from their logical conse-

quences in a country where the diversities and intricacies of social interests are proverbial. Thus, an intestine feud on Mount Lebanon and violent outrages at Damascus produced an armed intervention. France sent troops. The Christian population is divided and subdivided into religious denominations inveterately hating each other. The French have an exclusive and unmasked sympathy for the Roman Catholics. The priesthood of that persuasion, and of its satellite Maronite Church, maintains an organised persecution of the Greek, Armenian, Jacobite, and Protestant churches, as well as of the Druze community. These latter were exposed to all the overbearing arrogance of those especially protected by the French, which went so far as the perpetration of many murders and acts of barbarous vindictiveness. The Mussulmans, too, were exasperated against the Christians in general by the character of the protection exercised in favour of a portion of them, and were irritated still more by the insolence of those who were so protected. Disunion in the country was thus more firmly established. Instead of helping the Christian population to qualify itself for future beneficial changes, intervention in that case rendered them less fit than ever to hold a more advantageous position; and I am of opinion that it will generally have that effect if adopted on other such emergencies. It appears to me that the best chance for Turkey is to make desirable changes grow, as it were naturally, out of the course of internal events, by a steady but not violent pressure from without, inducing

the progressive admission of the Christians to a share in the government of their country, and afterwards founding on that social improvement a new political position, more advantageous to the empire itself and less incongruous with the state of feeling in Europe. I should like to see this country gradually transformed, not suddenly emancipated. The more vigorous energies of the Christian would no longer be without a scope, and drive him to the feet of foreign influences. The pride of the Mussulman would be appeased by material gain, and the cessation of interference from abroad. The only European influence I should wish for on the spot is that of *settlers*, which, I think, would act as a safeguard against a continuance of unapplied reforms. In Asiatic Turkey three-fourths of the population are Mahometan; in European Turkey, two-fifths. The government of the whole is an absolute despotism, formerly tempered, as Chateaubriand said, by regicide on the part of the Turks, but still also by what is much more to the purpose, by those municipal institutions of the Lower Empire which survived its fall. Each community has its individual liberty, though all are collectively ruled by an arbitrary system. With the relative proportions above-mentioned in the numerical strength of the two great distinctive creeds, and notwithstanding the proclaimed will of the sovereign in behalf of equality, the privileges of the Christians, municipal or political, present and future, may at any time be imperilled by popular resistance to the realisation of decrees, be it openly violent or latently inert. Then

would the infusion of foreign blood and the influx of foreign gold act as a powerful diversion in favour of a peaceful settlement of differences. There would be a difficulty with regard to jurisdiction, for it never could be expected that land should be held by persons not amenable to the laws of the country; but the capitulations, sanctioning foreign protection, must soon undergo some modification, whether there be colonisation or not. The wide circulation of British coin during the Crimean war went far to teach the inhabitants of the interior a salutary lesson, which the admission of foreign enterprise and capital would complete. That image of a stranger queen, of fabulous wealth, imprinted on apparently uncountable pieces of money, finding their way to every obscure hamlet or Nomadic camp, where a bushel of barley, a baggage-mule, or an ox for slaughter, was to be found, while it struck them with astonishment, awakened a keen appetite for gain in hundreds and thousands who had theretofore been content to doze away existence beneath a blazing eastern sun, in the cheap enjoyment of the simple necessaries of life. The apathetic Mussulman conciliated the more active Christian, whose gold-loving instincts responded promptly to the chink of pounds sterling, whose very reverence for co-religionist Russia oozed from his heart in proportion as his pockets filled with British gold, or whose Papistic fraternity itself became estranged from France by that potent metal. Immemorial foes became partners in contracts, great or small, for ship-loads of corn as for the solitary bullock and beast of burden,

owned by the lazy Turk and sent to the allied camp by the energetic Greek or Maronite. All eyes naturally turned to the quarter whence benefits accrued, and sought to learn its will. The flow of wealth from peaceful agriculture and trade would set in the same way, and its consequences be the same as those produced by warfaring requirements. Stale old enmities would be buried under heaps of jointly accumulated bales of cotton and wool, and stores of grain produced by united capital and labour. The natural resources of the country are unbounded with respect to tillage and pasture. Millions of deep alluvial and thickly-wooded acres pant for the plough and the axe. The land is broad and rich; industry would go in and possess it. Vast tracts of fertile soil lie waste; for the rude and desultory cultivation of the Turkish provinces is hardly deserving of the name of husbandry. Desolating wars and secular bad government have reduced them to such a pitch of abasement, that their meagre population barely elicits from the profuse and varied bounties of nature a scanty subsistence. Internal security and a ready remunerative sale would of course extend and improve cultivation. Consumption of manufactured goods exchanged for raw materials would augment. Vigour would be imparted to a country, languishing but containing the elements of power, created but dormant century after century, and waiting only for profitable employment. Suitable marts demand only the exercise of activity to produce a copious influx of wealth. That activity would be called into existence were the classes

of the population of Turkey not only nominally, bu
really equal before the law, and were the implantatio
of foreign enterprise encouraged. By putting a check
upon the abuse of power through its equal distribution
between Mussulmans and Christians, by effecting a
more equitable arrangement of the respective and rela-
tive rights of conflicting sects, and by opening the
country to foreign colonists, along with an absolut
prohibition of foreign protection and local interference,
these ends might be attained in so far as legislative
means can avail. Interests now antagonistic would
thus be bound together. The labourer or artisan, no
longer forced to work for another, might then work for
that other while working for himself. A middle class
would spring up from such a regulation of social rights
in proportion as prosperity might enable the cultivator
and tradesman to extend their operations, and according
as necessity might oblige the great proprietor of land
and looms to become himself industrious. Trade would
then be indigenous, and wealth would cease to be
monopolised by local magnates and foreign speculators,
while money, instead of filling the coffers of a favoured
few, leaving the provinces to purchase influence, or
being sent abroad by strangers, would circulate at
home, begetting affluence, producing what is now im-
ported, and remaining in the country as the stock of
future generations. The missing links in the social
chain once supplied, the equilibrium essential to pro-
ductive harmony established, the different wheels of
the machine so adjusted as to work well alone, and the

population brought to the normal state of well-regulated society, prosperity would become possible, and good government certain. The hour of redemption from starving pride on the one hand, and from debasing servitude on the other, sounded for millions of human beings at the close of the Crimean war. The lapse of a certain interval between the shock of a great conflict, and the realisation of its stipulated and proclaimed results, naturally took place. The shaken supremacy of the dominant race oscil[redacted]a time, and Europe looked on in expectation[redacted]nal practical abolition of all class privileges. Matters have settled down, however, on their former basis. The decree, comprising the germs of such important social and political changes, has remained a dead letter, in so far as regards all practical results. The warning conveyed to the tottering throne of Turkey has hitherto been disregarded. Unaided and unwatched, one can have but little confidence in the administrative abilities and political morality of any man or set of men in Turkey. With the exception of Fuad Pasha, Ahmed Wefik Effendi, and a select few, too few to achieve the rapid transformation of so vast and so corrupt an Empire, the best-intentioned sultan has not instruments at his disposal for such an undertaking. Hence arises the grievous evil of foreign local interference in the details of government, to which it may not be unfair to attribute in a great measure the failure of Turkey to keep her promises. She is not left time nor temper to do it under the constant teasing of embassies about trifles.

Every one knows that our own ambassador has never followed that course, and that Sir Henry Bulwer has, on the contrary, contributed very efficaciously towards the realisation of every good purpose of the Porte, while his not having always succeeded either in effecting progress or preventing evil is not to be wondered at in presence of other influences, less disinterested and beneficent, but equally entitled by position to claim the Sultan's careful consideration. I cannot doubt, however, that by [redacted] and justifiable insistence on the adoption of [redacted] principles and practice, emanating directly from a friendly power, so as to escape the Scylla and Charybdis besetting the local approaches to the Porte, Turkey might be placed and kept in a train of improvement advantageous to herself and satisfactory to Europe. It must, certainly, be a work of time; for I imagine that a people cannot at once be raised, as was expected, from the actual state of the Sultan's subjects by international stipulations and imperial enactments, however beneficial and comprehensive they may appear, without passing through a period of transition. That period has commenced; whether or not it will ever arrive at a favourable issue, is still an unsolved problem, involving the peace of Europe.

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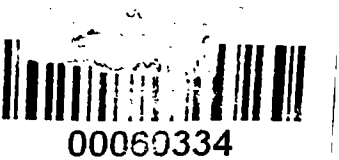
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